MARIOLOGY

A DOGMATIC TREATISE ON THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

WITH AN APPENDIX ON THE WORSHIP OF THE SAINTS, RELICS, AND IMAGES

BY

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MARY'S DIVINE MOTHERHOOD AS THE SOURCE OF ALL HER PREROGATIVES

The Blessed Virgin Mary is really and truly the Mother of God. This fact is the source and font of all her privileges. The dignity of divine motherhood has its correlative in a series of supernatural gifts, which by a general term we may describe as "fulness of grace" (*plenitudo gratiae*).

CHAPTER I

MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD

1. The Heresy of Nestorianism.—The Ebionites, Photinus, and Paul of Samosata had undermined the dignity of Mary by attacking the Divinity of Jesus Christ; Nestorianism directly assailed the dogma of her divine motherhood.

a) Nestorius was a pupil of Theodore of Mopsuestia,[3] who held that the Incarnation involved a complete transformation of the Logos, and that, consequently, Mary was the mother not of God (θεοτόκος), but of a mere man, though this man was the bearer of the Divine Logos.[4] This Mariological error naturally developed into the Christological heresy that there are two physical persons in Christ.

b) The Third Ecumenical Council, which met in Ephesus on Whitsunday, 431, under the presidency of St. Cyril of Alexandria,[5] defined it as an article of faith that Mary is really and truly the

3 Theodore of Mopsuestia was born about the year 350. On his life and writings cfr. Bardenhewer-Shahan, *Patrology*, pp. 318 sqq., Freiburg and St. Louis 1908.

4 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, pp. 89 sq.

5 Cfr. Funk-Cappadelta, *A Manual of Church History*, Vol. I, pp. 156 sq., London 1910.

mother of God. To emphasize this truth the Council employed the dogmatic term θεοτόκος, which was destined to become a touchstone of the true faith and, like ὁμοούσιος, *transsubstantiatio,* and *ex opere operato,* played an important part in the history of dogma.

The very first of the anathematisms pronounced by the Council of Ephesus reads: "If any one does not profess that Emmanuel is truly God, and that consequently the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God—inasmuch as she gave birth in the flesh to the Word of God made flesh, according to what is written: 'The Word was made flesh'—let him be anathema."[6] This important definition was reiterated and confirmed by several later councils, notably those of Chalcedon (A. D. 451) and Constantinople (A. D. 553).[7]

2. The Dogma of Mary's Divine Motherhood Proved from Sacred Scripture—The dogma that Mary is the mother of God is clearly and explicitly contained in Holy Scripture.

a) True, the Bible does not employ the formal term "Mother of God," but refers to the Blessed

6 "*Si quis non confitetur, Deum esse veraciter Emmanuel et propterea Dei genitricem* (θεοτόκον) *sanctam virginem: peperit* (γεγέννηκε) *enim secundum carnem factum Dei Verbum* (σάρκα γεγονότα τὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ λόγον), *secundum quod scriptum est: Verbum caro factum est, anathema sit.*" (*Syn. Ephes., can. 1, apud* Denzinger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum,* n. 113, 11th ed. Friburgi Brisgoviae 1911. We shall refer to this indispensable collection throughout this treatise as "Denzinger-Bannwart."

7 *Conc. Constantinop. II (Oecum. V), apud* Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 218.

Virgin merely as "the mother of Jesus" [8] or at most as "mother of the Lord." [9] However, since Jesus Christ is true God, all texts that refer to Mary as His mother are so many proofs of her divine maternity. And such texts abound. Thus, while Sacred Scripture represents St. Joseph [10] merely as the foster-father of our Lord,[11] it attributes to Mary all the ordinary functions of motherhood—conception, gestation, and parturition.[12] The motherhood of the Virgin had been foretold by Isaias: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel [*i. e.*, God with us]." [13] The fulfilment of this prophecy was announced in almost identical terms by the Archangel Gabriel. Luke I, 31: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb,[14] and shalt bring forth a son,[15] and thou shalt call his name Jesus;" and the heavenly messenger expressly added: "Therefore the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." [16] Since Mary gave birth to the Son of God, she is really and truly the mother of God. St. Paul says in his Epistle to

8 Cfr. John II, 1; XIX, 26.

9 Cfr. Luke I, 43.

10 Cfr. Matth. I, 25; Luke I, 34 sq.

11 Cfr. Luke III, 23: "*Et ipse Iesus erat incipiens quasi annorum triginta, ut putabatur* (ὡς ἐνομίζετο) *filius Ioseph.*"

12 Cfr. Matth. I, 18 sqq.; Luke II, 5 sqq.

13 Is. VII, 14. Cfr. A. J. Maas, S. J., *Christ in Type and Prophecy*, Vol. I, pp. 351 sqq., New York 1893.

14 "*Concipies in utero* (συλλήμψῃ ἐν γαστρί)."

15 "*Paries filium* (τέξῃ υἱόν)."

16 "*Filius Dei* (υἱός Θεοῦ)."

the Galatians (IV, 4): "When the fulness of time was come, God sent his son, made of a woman."[17] If the man Jesus, "made of a woman," is the Son of God, then that "woman" must be the mother of a Divine Son, and, consequently, mother of God.[18]

b) The argument from Tradition is most effectively presented by showing from the writings of the Fathers who flourished before the time of Nestorius that Nestorianism and not the Council of Ephesus was guilty of innovation.

α) The primitive Christian belief in the divine motherhood of Mary is evidenced by certain pious practices common at a time when the faithful had hardly yet begun to make their faith the subject of reflection. Such practices were: the recitation of the Apostles' Creed, which was also the early form of baptism, and the liturgical prayers employed in public worship. The Apostles' Creed professes faith in "Jesus Christ, His [God the Father's] only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." This is an unequivocal assertion of two truths: (1) that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the mother of Christ, and (2) that she is really and truly the mother of God. The ancient liturgies expressly refer to her as θεοτόκος or Deipara.[19]

[17] τόν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός.

[18] Rom. IX, 5. The Biblical argument is fully developed by Bishop A. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift*, pp. 83 sqq., Münster 1900. Engl. tr. by Brossart, New York 1913, pp. 89 sqq.

[19] For the proofs of this statement see Renaudot, *Collect. Liturg. Orient.*, t. I, pp. 36, 42, 72, 112, 150, 507, etc., Paris 1716.

β) There is direct Patristic evidence to the same effect.

In spite of a few dissenting voices (*e. g.*, Theodore of Mopsuestia and other teachers of the Antiochene school), the orthodox contemporaries of Nestorius confidently appealed to the early Fathers in support of their contention.

The word θεοτόκος itself originated at Alexandria in the third century.[20]

St. Cyril freely admits that it does not occur in the New Testament. But he hastens to add: "However, they have handed down to us the belief [itself], and in this sense we have been instructed by the holy Fathers [= sacred writers]." [21]—"This name θεοτόκος," he says in another place, "was perfectly familiar to the ancient Fathers." [22]

There is a treatise "On the Mother of God" [23] mentioned in the extracts of Philippus Sidetes,[24] and ascribed by him to Prierius, a priest of Alexandria in the time of Bishop Theonas (281–300); but its authenticity is doubtful. We know for certain, however, that, at about the same time, Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, who had ordained St. Athanasius to the diaconate in 319, employed the term θεοτόκος in a letter addressed to Alexander of Constantinople in reference to the heresy of Arius. We also have the undoubtedly genuine testimony of Theodoret of Cyrus, the most violent and at

20 It first occurs in the works of Origin. On the history of the term see Newman, *Select Treatises of St. Athanasius*, Vol. II, pp. 210–215, 9th ed., London 1903.

21 *Ep. ad Monach. Aegypti*, I.

22 *De Recta Fide ad Regin.*, c. 9.

23 Περὶ τῆς θεοτόκου.

24 On Philippus Sidetes and his writings cfr. Bardenhewer-Shahan, *Patrology*, p. 377.

the same time most learned opponent of St. Cyril, to the effect that "The first step towards innovation was the assertion that the holy Virgin, who, by the assumption of flesh from herself, gave birth to the Word of God, must not be called mother of God (θεοτόκος), but only mother of Christ (χριστοτόκος), whereas the most ancient heralds of the orthodox faith taught the faithful to name and believe the Mother of the Lord θεοτόκος, according to the Apostolic tradition." [25]

John, Patriarch of Antioch, who sided with Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus and did not make peace with St. Cyril till 433, observes: "No ecclesiastical teacher has put aside this title [θεοτόκος]; those who have used it are many and eminent, and those who have not used it have not attacked those who used it." [26]

This statement can be easily substantiated from the writings of St. Athanasius, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Ignatius of Antioch, and others of the early Fathers. Thus St. Athanasius (+ 373) says: "We confess that the Son of God became man by the assumption of flesh from the virgin mother of God." [27] St. Gregory Nazianzen declares: "Let him who will not accept Mary as the mother of God be excluded from God." [28]

The word θεοτόκος must have readily suggested itself to the later Fathers when they noted such expressions as this in the Epistle of St. Ignatius to the Ephesians: "Our God Jesus Christ was borne (ἐκυοφορήθη) by Mary in her maternal womb." [29]

It is not necessary for our present purpose to cite the

25 Theodoretus, "Compendium of Heretical Fables" (Αἱρετικῆς κακομυθίας ἐπιτομή), IV, 12. We use Newman's translation (*Athanasius*, II, 210).

26 *Ep. ad Nestor.*, I, reprinted in Migne, *P. G.*, LXXVII, 1455. (Cfr. Newman, *l. c.*, p. 211.)

27 ἐκ παρθένου τῆς θεοτόκου. *Orat. contra Arianos*, IV, n. 32.

28 *Epist. 101 ad Cledon.*, c. 1.

29 *Epist. ad Ephes.*, 8.

Fathers who wrote *after* the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus. The teaching of the Greek Fathers was sifted with Scholastic thoroughness by St. John of Damascus in the third part of his famous "Fountain of Wisdom." [30]

3. Theological Discussion.—For a deeper understanding of the dogma let us consider in what motherhood essentially consists, and how Christ's eternal γέννησις from the Father is related to His temporal birth from the Virgin Mary.

a) Nestorius' chief objection grew out of a radically false idea of motherhood. He contended that Mary could not have been the mother of God because this would necessarily entail the pagan fallacy that God begot a divine son from a human mother, or that a human mother endowed her son with a divine nature. This inference is based on a misconception of the Hypostatic Union and of the nature of generation. To become truly the mother of God it was not necessary for Mary to communicate to her Son a divine nature. All that was required was that the Son whom she conceived and brought forth, was the Divine Person of the Logos. Every mother, when she gives birth to a child, brings forth a person, not merely the body of a person. In the case of the Blessed Virgin Mary this person was the Son of God. Hence, though

30 *De Fide Orthodoxa*, III, 2 and 12. Cfr. Petavius, *De Incarnatione*, V, 15; V. Schweitzer, "Alter des Titels θεοτόκος," in the *Katholik*, of Mayence, 1903, I, pp. 97 sqq.

Mary did not bring forth the Godhead as such, but merely a Divine Person, she is truly the Mother of God. The fact that she conceived and gave birth to the body but not to the spiritual soul of her son in no way derogates from her motherhood. "No one will say of Elizabeth," observes St. Cyril to Nestorius, "that she is the mother of St. John's flesh, but not of his soul; for she gave birth to the person of the Baptist, *i. e.*, a human being composed of body and soul." [31]

Mary not only gave birth to the Divine Logos, she also conceived Him. If it could be shown that she conceived a mere man, even though this man was subsequently, before his birth, transformed into a Godman, Nestorius would have been justified in denying her the title of *θεοτόκος*, for in that hypothesis she would indeed have been a mere *ἀνθρωποτόκος*, since motherhood is founded on the act of conception. It was with a view to safeguard the dogma of the Hypostatic Union that the Church dogmatically defined the temporal coincidence of Christ's conception with the Hypostatic Union.[32]

The conception of Christ includes three simultaneous events: (1) the formation of His human body from the maternal *ovum;* (2) the creation and infusion into that body of a spiritual soul; and (3) the Hypostatic Union of body and soul, *per modum unius,* with the Divine Person of the Logos. When Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me accord-

31 *Epist. ad Monach.*
32 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology,* pp. 166 sqq.

ing to thy word," [33] the mystery of the Incarnation was consummated.

From the fact that these three events occurred simultaneously, the medieval Scholastics concluded that our Lord's body was informed by the spiritual soul from the first moment of its existence, and that it was at once complete and perfectly organized.[34] The last-mentioned of these conclusions was based on the false Aristotelian theory that the human embryo is at first inanimate and becomes quickened by the spiritual soul only after it has reached a certain stage of physiological development,— a process which in the male was believed to require forty, in the female, sixty days from the instant of conception. As this principle was manifestly inapplicable to Christ, the Scholastics had recourse to a miracle and simply denied the existence of successive stages in the embryological evolution of the Godman.

It is more in conformity with modern science to assume that the spiritual soul informs the human embryo from the moment of conception and gradually builds up the body and its organs, until the child becomes normally capable of living outside the uterus. Applying this theory to Christ, we hold that Christ's spiritual soul was infused into the inchoate embryo at the moment of His conception. This is but another way of saying that the sacred humanity of our Divine Lord was subject to the ordinary laws of human development, and that He became like unto us in all things except sin.[35]

The objection that a being composed of a spiritual soul and an incomplete body would not be a true man,

33 Luke I, 38.
34 Cfr. Suarez, *De Myst. Vitae Christi,* disp. 11, sect. 2.
35 Heb. IV, 15.

may be dismissed with the remark that such a being falls squarely under the philosophical definition of *animal rationale.*

If we except Christ from the general law of nature and postulate unnecessary miracles, we divest the motherhood of the Blessed Virgin of its true meaning and teach a refined Docetism. For the gradual development of a child under the influence of the plastic powers of nature constitutes one of the essential notes of maternity.

b) As there are two natures in Christ, a distinction must be made between His eternal generation from the Father and His temporal birth from the Virgin Mother. This basic dogma of Christology[36] necessarily entails a twofold sonship. By His eternal γέννησις from the Father, Jesus is the true Son of God; by His temporal birth from the Virgin He is the true Son of Mary. Being one undivided person, the Son of God is therefore absolutely identical with the child of the Virgin, and Mary is consequently in very truth the mother of God. It follows that the dogma of Christ's twofold sonship does not involve the Nestorian and Adoptionist implication that there are two Sons of God.

Theologians have raised the question whether the relation between Christ's Divine Sonship and the motherhood of Mary is real or merely logical.[37]

36 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology,* pp. 61 sqq.

37 On this subtle problem cfr. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* 3a, qu. 35, art. 5; Suarez, *De Myst. Vitae Christi,* disp. 12, sect. 2.

Christ's relation as a man to His human mother is no doubt as real as Mary's relation to her Divine Son. Christ's relation as Son of God or Logos to His human mother, on the other hand, is purely logical, because, as a self-existing and absolutely independent Being, God cannot stand in any real relation to a creature. Hence St. Thomas teaches: "From the temporal birth there arises no real, but only a logical sonship, though Christ is really the Son of the Virgin. God is really the Lord of His creatures, despite the fact that His dominion over them is no real relation. He is called Lord in a real sense, because of the real power which He exercises. Similarly Christ is in a real sense the Son of the Virgin, because of His real birth from her."[38]

38 *Quodlib.*, IX, art. 4, ad 1: "*Ex nativitate temporali non innascitur filiatio realis, sed rationis tantum, quamvis Christus realiter sit filius virginis; sicut Deus realiter est Dominus creaturae, quamvis in eo dominium non sit relatio realis; dicitur enim realiter Dominus propter realem potestatem, et sic dicitur Christus realiter filius virginis propter realem nativitatem.*" Cfr. G. B. Tepe, *Institutiones Theologicae,* Vol. III, pp. 683 sqq., Paris 1896.

CHAPTER II

MARY'S DIGNITY AS MOTHER OF GOD AND THE GRACES ATTACHED TO HER DIVINE MOTHERHOOD

Like the Hypostatic Union of the two Natures in Christ, the Divine Motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be regarded from a twofold point of view: (1) ontologically, *i. e.*, in its objective dignity (*dignitas maternitatis divinae in se*); and (2) ethically, in its causal connexion with the prerogatives proper to this exalted office (*plenitudo gratiae correspondens dignitati*). Christology shows how the Hypostatic Union immediately and substantially sanctified the manhood of our Lord in direct proportion to His infinite dignity as Godman.[1] In a similar though not precisely the same manner Mary's objective dignity as mother of God constitutes both the intrinsic principle and the extrinsic standard of her supernatural purity and holiness. The one postulates the other as a cause its effect.

1 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, pp. 224 sqq.

SECTION I

THE OBJECTIVE DIGNITY OF MARY'S DIVINE MOTHERHOOD

Scheeben[2] lucidly demonstrates the unique dignity of Mary's Divine Motherhood by pointing out, (1) that it confers upon her a rank vastly superior to that of any other creature; (2) that it constitutes her the very centre of the hierarchy of rational creatures, and (3) that it makes her an intermediary between God and the universe.

1. The Transcendent Rank of Mary as Mother of God.—The Blessed Virgin Mary, as Mother of God, ranks high above all other creatures; in fact she is in a category all her own, inasmuch as she embodies the most perfect type of created personality, just as the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ represents the most perfect type of human nature.

a) As mother of the Divine Logos, Mary stands in a unique relation to the Second Person of the Trinity. The Logos is the true Son both of His Heavenly Father and of His earthly mother. This double consubstantiality (ὁμοουσία),

2 *Dogmatik,* Vol. III, § 277.

based upon His twofold birth, is strongly emphasized in the ancient creeds and conciliar definitions.

The so-called Athanasian Creed[3] teaches: "For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man: God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man, of the substance of His mother, born into the world."[4] And the Fifth Council of Constantinople (A. D. 553) defines: "If any one do not confess that the Word of God has two births, the one before the worlds from the Father, out of time and incorporeally, and the other . . . from the holy and glorious Deipara and ever Virgin Mary, . . . let him be anathema."[5]

The dignity of Mary's maternal relation to the Second Person of the Trinity cannot be adequately expressed in human terms. The Fathers try to explain it by applying to her certain passages of the Psalms,[6] wherein the beauties of the Ark of the Covenant, the Temple of Solomon, and the great City of Zion are described in exalted terms. In fact they regard the Ark of Noë, the Ark of the Covenant, the Golden Bowl, etc., as types of the Blessed Virgin.[7]

3 This creed, known also from its first word as the *Symbolum Quicunque,* is an admirable résumé of the doctrine of St. Athanasius, but is not his work. It is of Western origin, and was written in Spain, against Priscillianism. Cfr. Bardenhewer-Shahan, *Patrology,* p. 255.

4 "*Est ergo fides recta, ut credamus et confiteamur, quia D. N. Iesus Christus Dei Filius Deus et homo est: Deus est ex substantia Patris ante saecula genitus, et homo est ex substantia matris in saeculo natus.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 40.)

5 "*Si quis non confitetur, Dei Verbi duas esse nativitates* (τὰς δύο γεννήσεις), *unam quidem ante saecula ex Patre sine tempore incorporaliter, alteram vero. . . . de sancta gloriosa Dei genitrice* (θεοτόκου) *et semper virgine Maria, . . . talis anathema sit.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 214.)

6 Ps. XVIII, 6; XLV, 5 sqq.; LXXXVI, 1 sqq., etc.

7 On these types cfr. the first of St. John Damascene's Homilies on

b) Mary's Divine Motherhood entails an altogether unique relation to the First Person of the Trinity. She can claim one and the same Son with God the Father, not, of course in the heathen sense, as god and goddess, but in the Christian sense, as the Divine Father and a human mother. This miraculous relationship on the part of Mary may be technically described as her *daughterhood.* It forms the theological counterpart of her motherhood and is a prerogative peculiar to Our Lady, resulting in a special kind of adoption. God the Father cannot but look with unalloyed pleasure upon the mother of His Divine Son. She is His adopted daughter (*filia adoptiva*), who excels all His other adopted children by right of primogeniture.

On this prerogative are based Mary's sublime titles of "Lady" (*Domina, κυρία*) and "Queen" (*regina βασίλεια*). St. John of Damascus observes that "in becoming the mother of the Creator she became the mistress of all His creatures."[8] To emphasize this aspect of her dignity some Fathers and medieval theologians apply to Mary, though not of course in a strict sense, certain epithets ascribed to the *sapientia ingenita* by the Sapiential Books of the Old Testament. The Church has incorporated a number of these into her liturgy.[9]

c) Mary's relationship extends also to the

the "*Dormitio*" (*εἰς τὴν κοίμησιν*) of the Blessed Virgin (Migne, *P. G.*, XCVI, 699 sqq.). On the rationale of Marian typology see Schaefer-Brossart, *The Mother of Jesus in Holy Scripture,* pp. 12 sqq., New York 1913.

8 *De Fide Orthod.*, IV, 14.

9 For further particulars see Schaefer-Brossart, *l. c.*, pp. 102 sqq.

Holy Ghost, because He is the product of the joint spiration of the Father and the Son.[10] In this capacity she has been aptly compared to a spouse,—an analogy adumbrated by the Apostles' Creed when it says that Christ "was conceived by the Holy Ghost." This appropriation excludes the coöperation of a human male and represents the fruit of Mary's womb as a supernatural product.[11]

Catholic theologians and the Church in her liturgy illustrate this sublime relation between the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Ghost by quotations from the Canticle of Canticles. The "Spouse" is sometimes explained to be Mary, sometimes the Church, and sometimes the human soul.[12]

Thus we have seen that Mary is the mother of the Divine Logos, the daughter of God the Father, and the spouse of the Holy Ghost. What mortal mind can form an adequate conception of this threefold dignity? Need we wonder that some ecclesiastical writers exalt it as ineffable and compare it with the inscrutability of the Almighty Himself? Thus Bishop Basil of Seleucia (d. about 459) says in one of his sermons: "As it is impossible to conceive and utter God, so the stupendous mystery of the mother of God transcends every intellect and tongue."[13]

10 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *The Divine Trinity*, pp. 168 sqq., St. Louis 1912.

11 *Semen divinum.*

12 Cfr. B. Schäfer, *Das Hohelied*, § 18, Münster 1876; H. Zschokke, *Die biblischen Frauen im Alten Testamente*, § 41, Wien 1882.

13 The passage occurs in the thirty-third of the Sermons (λόγοι)

This sublime dignity is not a quality, but a relation, and as such may be termed infinite; for infinitude, applied to dignity, does not involve infinity of person. Albertus Magnus teaches: "The Son endows with infinity the goodness of His mother; if the fruit is infinitely good, the tree too must in a sense possess some infinite goodness."[14] And his great pupil St. Thomas Aquinas says: "From the fact that she is the Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin has a certain infinite dignity, derived from the infinite Good who is God, and on this account there cannot be anything better, just as there cannot be anything better than God."[15]

Our Lady's infinite dignity must not, however, be conceived as separable from her character as God's favorite daughter with its claim to a corresponding measure of grace and glory. Without this character the dignity of divine motherhood would remain in a sense imperfect. It was for this reason no doubt that our Divine Lord answered the woman who exclaimed: "Blessed is the womb that bore thee," by saying: "Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it."[16]

2. Mary's Relation to Her Fellow-Creatures.—The Blessed Virgin Mary is the most eminent member of the human family. With the

ascribed to Basil. For a sketch of his life see Bardenhewer-Shahan, *Patrology*, pp. 531 sq.

14 "*Filius infinitat matris bonitatem, infinita bonitas in fructu infinitam quandam adhuc ostendit in arbore bonitatem.*" (*Mariale*, qu. 197.)

15 That is to say, there can be no greater motherhood than Mary's, just as there can be nothing better than God. *Summa Theol.*, 1a, qu. 25, art. 6, ad 4: "*Beata Virgo ex hoc, quod est mater Dei, habet quandam dignitatem infinitam ex bono infinito, quod est Deus, et ex hac parte non potest aliquid melius fieri, sicut non potest aliquid melius esse Deo.*"

16 Luke XI, 27 sq.

sole exception of her Divine Son, ("the first-born of every creature," with whom, of course, she cannot be compared either from this or any other point of view), she is undoubtedly the loveliest flower that ever bloomed on the tree of humanity, and we are perfectly justified in addressing her as "Mystic Rose" and "Spiritual Lily." We show a still profounder conception of her dignity and mission when we venerate her as the human organ specially chosen by the Holy Ghost for the miracle of the Incarnation, whereby she became a most precious "Spiritual Vessel," for, as we pray in the Ave Maria: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

How are we to define Mary's relationship to her fellow-creatures?

She is not, of course, the "head" of the human race. That dignity belongs solely to Jesus Christ, the "second Adam," who restored our lost innocence. Mary gave birth to her own spiritual and supernatural head in the person of Christ. Her unique position in the mystic body of the Church has been likened to that of the "neck,"[17] but she is perhaps more appropriately compared to the heart, which of all the bodily organs most perfectly reflects the energy of the head and most effectively sustains its vital functions.[18] Thus Mary's Divine Motherhood takes on the character and functions of a spiritual motherhood in relation to all men, especially those who are living members of the body of Christ.

17 "*Collum corporis mystici.*"

18 Cfr. Scheeben, *Dogmatik*, Vol. III, p. 512.

As St. Augustine beautifully says: "[She is] spiritually the mother not indeed of our Head, *i. e.*, the Saviour Himself, from whom rather she is spiritually born . . . but [the spiritual mother] of His members, *i. e.*, ourselves, because she coöperated in love towards the birth of faithful [Christians] in the Church who are the members of that Head; bodily she is truly the mother of that Head." [19] Some of the Fathers describe Mary's mystic relation to the human race by referring to her as a root (*radix*) or vine (*vitis*),— two analogies which, of course, in an infinitely higher sense apply to our Lord Himself.

3. Mary as an Intermediary Between God and the World.—Like her Divine Son, though not in the same sense, Mary is an intermediary between God and His creatures. Christ's mediatorship is based on the Hypostatic Union of the two Natures in one Person; that of the Blessed Virgin depends entirely on her Divine Motherhood. Hers is therefore a participated and secondary mediatorship (*mediatio participata s. secundaria*), which derives its essence and effectiveness solely from the grace of Christ; furthermore, it is not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end.

Many Fathers and theologians compare the mediatorship of Mary to the ladder which Jacob beheld in his dream, "standing upon the earth, and the top thereof

19 "*Et mater quidem spiritu non Capitis nostri, quod est ipse Salvator, ex quo magis illa spiritaliter nata est, . . . sed plane membrorum eius, quod nos sumus, quia cooperata est caritate ut fideles in ecclesia nascerentur, quae illius Capitis membra sunt: corpore vero ipsius Capitis mater.*" (*De Virg.*, c. 6.)

touching heaven." [20] She is the ladder by which the Son of God descended from, and by which men ascend to heaven.[21] Other favorite Patristic metaphors are a ring (*annulus*) and a bridge (*pons*) restoring the lost connection of mankind with God. St. Proclus (+ 466) combined all these similes in an enthusiastic eulogy. "Mary, I say, maiden and mother, virgin and heaven, the singular bridge between God and men, the astonishing weaver's beam of humanity, on which in an ineffable manner was woven the garment of that [Hypostatic] Union, the Holy Ghost Himself being the weaver, the connecting thread the power from above, the wool that ancient fleece of Adam, the woof the immaculate flesh taken from the Virgin, the shuttle the immeasurable grace of the bearer, the artist the Logos, entering through her hearing." [22]

The objection that these prerogatives are not all expressly enumerated in Holy Scripture is met partly by reference to certain Old Testament texts and types, and partly by the statement that the dignity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is sufficiently indicated in the pregnant passage: "From her was born Jesus, who is called the Christ." [23]

20 Gen. XXVIII, 12 sq.

21 Cfr. Zschokke, *Die biblischen Frauen*, p. 448.

22 *Orat. de Laud. S. Mariae*, 1. (Migne, *P. G.*, LXV, 679 sqq.) For further details consult Lehner, *Die Marienverehrung in den ersten Jahrhunderten*, 2nd ed., pp. 213 sqq., Stuttgart 1886.

23 ". . . *ex qua natus est Iesus, qui vocatur Christus.*" (Matth. I, 16).

SECTION 2

MARY'S FULNESS OF GRACE

Ripalda[1] and Scheeben[2] refer to Mary's Divine Motherhood as her immediate *forma sanctificans*. This view is based on a misapplied analogy with the Hypostatic Union and therefore untenable. But there can be no doubt that the dignity of Divine Motherhood imperatively postulates for its bearer the highest possible measure of interior grace and sanctification. For, though motherhood is merely a grace of vocation (*gratia gratis data*), its inherent dignity requires a corresponding worthiness on the part of the bearer. The mother of God could not have been a sinful woman. This reasoning finds strong support in Holy Scripture and Tradition.

1. THE DOGMATIC ARGUMENT.—Both Holy Scripture and Tradition teach that the Mother of Jesus was "full of grace."

a) The dogma of our Lady's "*plenitudo gratiae*" is formally contained in the angelic salutation: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee."[3] In the original Greek this text is even more graphic: "χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ Κύριος μετὰ σοῦ." The emphasis is on the word κεχαριτωμένη,

1 *De Ente Supernaturali*, disp. 70.

2 *Dogmatik*, Vol. III, § 276.

3 Luke I, 28: "*Ave gratiâ plena: Dominus tecum.*"

which is evidently intended to point out a predominant trait of the Virgin. That the salutation was quite extraordinary appears from the fact that Mary was "troubled" at the Angel's words and "thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be." [4]

In its primitive sense χαριτόω means *I show grace or favor.* God's way of showing favor to a rational creature is to endow him or her with sanctifying grace. Cfr. Eph. I, 6: "τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, ἐν ῇ ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς — of his grace, in which he hath graced us . . ." Hence κεχαριτωμένη means a woman full of grace,— endowed not merely with the extrinsic graces proper to her state of life, but with a full measure of sanctifying grace, which precedes the grace of vocation, strictly so called, by way of preparation and endowment. Mary was not yet *de facto* the Mother of God when the Angel addressed her as κεχαριτωμένη, for she had not yet given her consent. The phrase: "The Lord is with thee," is not part of the salutation proper; it is a statement, couched in ordinary Scriptural terms, promising her the divine protection for some definite task or mission. But as divine motherhood is conditioned upon intrinsic purity and holiness, and presupposes in its bearer many actual graces, the phrase "*Dominus tecum*" in this connection manifestly has the same meaning as "*gratiâ plena.*"

Following the lead of certain Fathers, we may moreover apply to the Blessed Virgin Mary a large number of Old Testament texts which find their full application in no one else but her. For example, Prov. XXXI, 29:

4 Luke I, 29.

"Many daughters have gathered together riches: thou hast surpassed them all." The enthusiastic description of the "Spouse" in the Canticle of Canticles can likewise be applied in its plenary sense only to the Mother of God.[5]

b) The Fathers delighted in unfolding the logical implications of the Angelic Salutation and in so doing measured the intrinsic graces of Mary by the standard of her sublime dignity as Mother of God.

St. Epiphanius says that she was "full of grace in every respect." [6] St. Athanasius, that she is called "full of grace, because, being filled with the Holy Ghost, she overflowed with all graces, and was overshadowed by the power of the Most High." [7] In an ancient homily wrongly ascribed to St. Gregory the Wonder-worker we read: "The most holy Virgin is truly the precious ark which received the whole treasure of sanctity." [8]

Other Patristic texts are even more convincing. We refer the student especially to those which, in connexion with Ps. XLIV, 12,[9] declare that Mary attracted the Son of the Heavenly King by her extraordinary beauty and holiness. It will suffice to quote St. Augustine, who says: "An abundance of grace was conferred on her, who merited to conceive and bear Him of whom we know that He was without sin." [10]

Our Lady's personal merit must not, however, be

5 Cfr. Schaefer-Brossart, *The Mother of Jesus in Holy Scripture*, pp. 133 sqq.; Otto Bardenhewer, *Mariä Verkündigung*, Freiburg 1905.

6 *Haer.*, 58, n. 24.

7 *Ep. ad Epictet.*

8 Migne, *P. G.*, X, 1150.

9 Ps. XLIV, 12: "The King shall greatly desire thy beauty."

10 *De Natura et Gratia*, c. 36: "*Plus gratiae ei collatum est, quia eum concipere meruit et parere, quem scimus nullum habuisse peccatum.*"

conceived as a *meritum de condigno* but merely *de congruo*. In the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, "The Blessed Virgin is said to have merited the privilege of bearing the Lord of all, not because it was through her merits that He became incarnate, but because, by the grace bestowed upon her she merited that measure of purity and holiness which fitted her to be the mother of God." [11]

c) The theological argument for our dogma is based partly on the self-evident truth that the grace bestowed upon any person is commensurate with his or her dignity or office, and partly on the consideration that the measure of interior graces with which our Lady was dowered must have corresponded to her triple relationship to the three Persons of the Divine Trinity.[12]

It was a duty of honor, so to speak, for the Most Holy Trinity to endow the Deipara with a full, nay with a superabundant measure of interior grace. "The more closely one approaches a principle of any kind," says St. Thomas, "the more one participates in the effect flowing from that principle. . . . Now Christ is the principle of grace; as God He is its author, as man its instrument. . . . But the Blessed Virgin Mary was nearest to Christ in His humanity, because He assumed His human nature from her. Consequently, she must have received from Him a greater fulness of grace than any one else." [13] This truth is emphasized in the dog-

11 *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 2, art. 11, ad 3: "*Beata virgo dicitur meruisse portare Dominum omnium, non quia meruit ipsum incarnari, sed quia meruit ex gratia sibi data illum puritatis et sanctitatis gradum, ut congrue posset esse mater Dei.*"

12 *V. supra*, Section 1.

13 *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 27, art. 5: "*Quanto aliquid magis appro-*

matic Bull "*Ineffabilis Deus*" of Pope Pius IX (Dec. 10th, 1854).[14]

2. Theological Aspects of the Dogma.—We now proceed to consider the dogma from the specifically theological standpoint by studying (a) its scope and (b) its limitations.

a) The state of grace, generally speaking, culminates in sanctifying grace. Hence the fulness of grace enjoyed by the Blessed Virgin Mary must be conceived as a superabundance of interior holiness.

How is her sanctity to be measured in the concrete? In trying to estimate it at its proper worth, let us compare the Mother of God, first to her Divine Son, and secondly to the Angels and Saints.

Her sanctity was inferior to the created sanctity of Jesus in proportion as divine motherhood falls short of the prerogative of the Hypostatic Union. In comparing her sanctity to that of the Angels and Saints, we shall find it difficult to establish a definite line of demarcation. No doubt the sanctity of the Blessed Virgin, while vastly inferior to the created sanctity of Christ, surpasses that of the most glorious seraph and the greatest Saints.

The epithet " full of grace " has a different meaning as

pinquat principio in aliquo genere, tanto magis participat effectum illius principii. . . . Christus autem est principium gratiae, secundum divinitatem quidem auctoritative, secundum humanitatem vero instrumentaliter. . . . Beata autem virgo Maria propinquissima Christo fuit secundum humanitatem, quia ex ea accepit humanam naturam. Et ideo prae caeteris maiorem debuit a Christo gratiae plenitudinem obtinere."

14 An almost complete translation of this Bull will be found in the Marquess of Bute's English edition of the Roman Breviary, Office for the Octave of the Immaculate Conception. See also *The Little Book of the Immac. Conception*, Dublin 1913.

applied by Sacred Scripture (1) to our Lord Himself,[15] (2) to St. Stephen,[16] (3) to the Apostles,[17] and (4) to our Blessed Lady. Though infinitely below the God-man, yet as Mother of God, Mary ranks high above her fellow creatures. Analogously, her *plenitudo gratiae* is intermediate between the fulness of grace peculiar to Christ and that of the holy Angels and Saints, far out-ranking the latter. Theologians are wont to describe it as *"plenitudo summae abundantiae," or "plenitudo redundantiae,"* but they deny that it is actually infinite, since not even the created sanctity of our Lord Himself can be conceived as *gratia actu infinita.*[18] To obtain some idea of the high degree of sanctifying grace peculiar to our Lady, we may assume with Suarez that it transcends by far the combined sanctity of all the Angels and Saints.[19]

What is true of sanctifying grace, must, *mutatis mutandis,* also be true of its supernatural effects, such as the theological virtues, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the infused moral virtues, with the sole exception of contrition, which our Blessed Mother cannot have exercised because she was sinless.

b) The Schoolmen reduced the truths we have just set forth to a technical axiom, to wit: *"Alii ad mensuram gratiam acceperunt, Maria autem gratiae plenitudinem."* Being liable to exagger-

15 Cfr. John I, 14: πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.

16 Acts VI, 8: Στέφαους δὲ πλήρης χάριτος.

17 Cfr. Acts II, 4: ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου.

18 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology,* pp. 230 sqq.

19 Suarez, *De Myst. Vitae Christi,* disp. 18, sect. 4, n. 8: *"Si mente concipiamus ex multitudine gratiarum sanctorum (et angelorum) omnium unam intentissimam gratiam consurgere, non adaequaret intensionem gratiae Virginis."*

ation, however, this axiom must be carefully circumscribed.

a) First, the *plenitudo gratiarum* does not mean that all possible supernatural prerogatives are superadded to sanctifying grace and its concomitant privileges.

Those who are guilty of this exaggeration (we are sorry to see Terrien among their number) are compelled to attribute to Mary all the prerogatives enjoyed by our First Parents in Paradise, *viz.:* bodily immortality, impassibility, and an infused knowledge of all natural truths. This theory is refuted by the tribulations which our Blessed Lady suffered and by the fact that she died a natural death.

A seventeenth-century divine, Christopher Vega, asserted that the soul of our Lady enjoyed the beatific vision of God throughout life.[20] If this were true, the Blessed Virgin could not have acquired any earthly merits by faith, and Elizabeth would have been mistaken when she said to her: "Blessed art thou that hast believed." [21] At most we may adopt the pious, though unproved and unprovable opinion of Suarez,[22] that Mary had a fleeting vision of the Blessed Trinity at the moment when she conceived, and again when she gave birth to her Divine Son.

St. Alphonsus de' Liguori held, and his opinion has found a recent defender in Fr. Terrien, that the Blessed Virgin enjoyed full consciousness and the use of reason from the moment of her conception. This assumption (which, by the way, dates back no farther than the

20 *Theologia Mariana,* Lugduni 1653.

21 Luke I, 45.

22 *De Myst. Vitae Christi,* disp. 19, sect. 4, n. 2.

fourteenth century), is utterly untenable. Not even the shred of an argument can be produced in its favor. St. Thomas expressly declares that Mary did not have the use of free-will while in her mother's womb but that this was the unique privilege of Christ.[23]

Equally untenable is the more recent assertion of Jeanjacquot[24] that the Blessed Virgin during her earthly life knew personally — as she now knows in Heaven — all those pious souls who in course of time would have recourse to her as the "Help of Christians."

It is, however, perfectly consonant with her dignity as Deipara to hold that Mary possessed a deep and extensive supernatural knowledge in matters of faith,— so wide and profound in fact, that she deserves to be called "Seat of Wisdom." Note, however, that, as applied to her in the liturgy, this epithet does not necessarily mean anything more than that our Lady is the bearer and mother of the increate Wisdom of the Logos, and that, consequently, we are not justified, on the strength of mere *a-priori* deductions, in ascribing to Mary in the wayfaring state an altogether singular knowledge of the divine mysteries and an infused familiarity with the wisdom of Sacred Scripture. The question she addressed to the Archangel Gabriel proves that she was unaware of the mystery of the Incarnation; for, as "the handmaid of the Lord" she makes an humble profession of faith. That her earthly life was one of faith, is evidenced also by the prophecy of Simeon[25] and by the reply she got from her twelve-year-old Son in the Temple, and which

23 *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 27, art. 3: "*Non statim habuit usum liberi arbitrii adhuc in ventre matris existens; hoc enim est speciale privilegium Christi.*" This view was defended by Gerson and Muratori.

24 *Simples Explications sur la Coopération de la S. Vièrge a l'Oeuvre de la Rédemption*, Paris 1875.

25 Luke II, 29 sqq.

she believingly treasured in her heart.[26] To assume that she was versed in the natural sciences or that her "wisdom" equalled the "infused knowledge" of the Angels, is unwarranted. Unlike her Divine Son, the humble "handmaid of the Lord" was not skilled in profane knowledge, nor did her exalted mission necessitate any intellectual attainments beyond those which strictly belong to the supernatural order.

While Mary, especially after she had "conceived of the Holy Ghost," undoubtedly enjoyed to an exalted degree the gift of contemplation, Scheeben exaggerates when he says that she lived in a continuous ecstasy uninterrupted even by sleep.[27] It is difficult to see the object of such mystical extravagances.

Did the *plenitudo gratiae* with which our Lady was endowed comprise such free and special graces as the power conferred by the Sacrament of Holy Orders? No; our Lord gave this and similar powers (spiritual jurisdiction, etc.), to St. Peter and the other Apostles, not to His mother. The same limitation applies to all other functions proper to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. However, there is nothing to prevent us from assuming that after the descent of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost day the Blessed Virgin Mary possessed the threefold gift of prophecy, tongues, and miracles in a measure corresponding to her eminent position in the primitive Church.[28]

26 Luke II, 49 sqq.

27 Scheeben, *Dogmatik,* Vol. III, §278.

28 St. Thomas denies that she possessed the gift of working miracles: "*Miraculorum autem usus ei non competebat, dum viveret, quia tunc temporis confirmanda erat doctrina Christi miraculis. Et ideo soli Christo et eius discipulis, qui erant baiuli doctrinae Christi, conveniebat miracula facere. Propter quod etiam de Ioanne Baptista dicitur quod 'signum fecit nullum'* (Io. X, 41), *ut scil. omnes Christo intenderent. Usum autem prophetiae habuit* [*B. Virgo*], *ut patet in Cantico quod fecit: 'Magnificat anima mea Dominum,' etc.* (Luc. I, 47)." (*Summa Theol.,* 3a, qu. 27, art. 5, ad 3.)

β) The "fulness of grace" enjoyed by our Blessed Mother was not complete and perfect at the outset, but developed gradually, reaching its climax at the moment of her death.

Unlike her Divine Son,[29] Mary advanced in grace and virtue. Catholic theologians distinguish three stages in her spiritual development. The first of these comprises her infancy up to the time when she conceived our Divine Lord. The second coincides with the period from the conception of Christ to her death. The third is the term of her everlasting beatitude in Heaven.[30] It should be noted, however, that St. Thomas erred in representing the *perfectio sanctificationis* characteristic of the first stage as *liberatio a culpa originali;* it must be defined as *praeservatio a culpa originali,* as we shall demonstrate further on.

Some few theologians hold that Mary attained to perfection of grace at the end of the first stage, *i. e.,* when she conceived her Divine Son. But this theory entails an inadmissible corollary, namely, that she received no increase of sanctifying grace after the Incarnation, neither *ex opere operato,* as during the descent of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost day, nor *ex opere operantis, e. g.,* by the merits of her virtuous life. Who would admit such an incongruity? The honor of our Lady is not enhanced by untrue, unprovable, and questionable asseverations, no matter how well-intentioned the zeal

29 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology,* pp. 236 sqq.

30 Cfr. St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica,* 3a, qu. 27, art. 5, ad. 2: *"Et similiter in beata virgine est triplex perfectio gratiae: prima quidem quasi dispositiva, per quam reddebatur idonea ut esset mater Christi, et haec fuit perfectio sanctificationis. Secunda autem perfectio gratiae fuit in beata virgine ex praesentia Filii Dei in eius utero incarnati. Tertia autem est perfectio finis, quam habet in gloria."*

of those who put them forth. She is so very great and holy that there is no need of exaggerating the graces with which she was endowed.

3. The Name "Mary."—To derive the dogma etymologically from the name "Mary" is a rather difficult undertaking, as the root-meaning of the word remains doubtful.

The word "Mary" (מִרְיָם, Aramaic מַרְיַם, Septuagint Μαριάμ) is genuinely Hebraic. The first woman who bore it in Bible history is the sister of Moses. Lauth's attempt to derive the word from the Egyptian has proved a failure. The Aramaic etymon signifies "Lady" (*Domina,* from מָרֵא, Lord). According to the various Hebrew words that have been assigned as its root, the word may have any one of a variety of meanings. First, *illuminatrix* (φωτίζουσα from מָאוֹר, *light-bearer*). Then, *the stubborn, refractory one* (from מָרָה, *to be stubborn*). It is not likely that a father would give his new-born daughter either of these fantastic names. As regards the other proposed derivations, *myrrh* (*myrrha,* μύῤῥα; Heb. מוֹר), which is both ancient and popular, will hardly be displaced by Bardenhewer's [31] more recent and rather prosaic interpretation of *the corpulent one* (from מָרָא, *to fatten*).[32] Akin to this derivation is an older but nobler one, *i. e., the strong, the tall.* The final syllable *iam* is usually treated as the suffix characteristic of Hebrew adjectives and abstract nouns, though some interpret it substantively and explain Miriam to mean *the bitter sea* (*mare amarum,* πικρὰ θάλασσα, from מַר, *bitter,* and יָם, *sea*) or *a drop of the sea,* (*stilla maris,* from מַר, *drop,*

31 Cfr. Otto Bardenhewer, *Der Name Maria.* Freiburg 1895.

32 Corpulency is said to be an attribute of beauty in the Orient.

and יָם, *sea*).[33] On purely linguistic grounds "Mary" may also be derived from *Marjam, i. e., the bitter,* or, figuratively, *the sorrowful one* (*amara, afflicta*).

Since the etymological derivation of the name is, and most likely will always remain doubtful, its typical and historic interpretation deserves all the more attention. "Mirjam [*i. e.,* the sister of Moses as a type of the mother of God] was the Israelite; Mary — as the antithesis between herself and Eve shows — is the Christian. Mirjam was *par excellence* 'she who had been healed' [of leprosy] in the Old Testament, an earnest of God's fidelity in keeping His promises; Mary is preëminently 'she who has been redeemed,' the token of salvation. As a member of the human race, a child of Adam, Mary, like the rest of us, had need of being redeemed. Had not our Lord in a most unique manner become her Redeemer, she too would have been overwhelmed by the bitter flood of original sin. . . . But as the old Testament Mirjam was preëminently the one who had been healed, so the New Testament Mary is preëminently the one who has been endowed with grace. It is for this reason that the Angel reassured her [Luke I, 30]: 'Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace (χάριν) with God.'"[34]

READINGS: — *P. Canisius, S. J., *De Maria Virgine Incomparabili et Dei Genitrice,* Ingolstadt 1577 (reprinted in Migne, *Summa Aurea de Laudibus B. V. Mariae,* Paris 1866). — G. Ventura, S. J., *La Madre di Dio Madre degli Uomini,* 2nd ed., Rome

33 The popular title "*Stella maris*" (star of the sea) is a corrupted reading of *stilla maris.* It goes back to the time of St. Jerome.

34 Al. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift,* pp. 142 sqq., 2nd ed., Münster 1900. English tr. by Brossart, p. 149. For further information see Knabenbauer, *Comment. in Matth.,* Vol. I, pp. 43 sqq., Paris 1892; Bucceroni, *Commentarii,* 4th ed., pp. 80 sqq.; Bardenhewer, *Der Name Maria. Geschichte der Deutung desselben,* Freiburg 1895; Minocchi, *Il Nome di Maria,* Florence 1897.

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The older literature on the subject is given in Maracci's *Bibliotheca Mariana,* Rome 1648.

A copious bibliography will be found in J. Bourassé, *Summa Aurea de Laudibus B. Mariae Virginis,* 13 vols., Paris 1866 sqq. and in G. Kolb, S. J., *Wegweiser in die Marianische Literatur,* 2nd ed., Freiburg 1905.

PART II

MARY'S SPECIAL PREROGATIVES

In the first part of this treatise we have explained the teaching of the Catholic Church with regard to the unique dignity of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Deipara or Mother of God (*θεοτόκος κεχαριτωμένη*), and the plenitude of grace with which she was endowed.

From this fundamental teaching can be deduced by aprioristic reasoning a number of extraordinary and unique prerogatives. However, in determining these prerogatives it is advisable to discard the deductive method and to rely entirely on the data furnished by Revelation.

Divine Revelation ascribes to our Lady two distinct classes of special prerogatives, one negative, the other positive.

Mary's negative prerogatives consist in the removal, or absence, of all defects and blemishes incompatible with divine motherhood. Her positive prerogatives may be defined as certain special privileges which God conferred upon her with a view to adorn and exalt her in a manner befitting her sublime dignity as Deipara.

CHAPTER I

THE NEGATIVE PREROGATIVES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

It is a dogmatic principle that the Mother of God was exempt from every defect or blemish. There are four separate and distinct prerogatives that may be enumerated under this category. They are:

(1) Exemption from original sin. This privilege of the Blessed Virgin is known as her Immaculate Conception.

(2) Immunity from personal sin. This prerogative is commonly called her sinlessness.

(3) Freedom from bodily pollution. It is this privilege we mean when we speak of her as "ever virgin."

(4) Exemption from the dominion of death. This privilege is implied in her bodily Assumption into Heaven.

The first two of these prerogatives have exclusive reference to the soul of our Blessed Lady; the third and fourth also include her body. We will discuss them one by one in four distinct Sections.

SECTION 1

MARY'S IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

1. State of the Question and Meaning of the Dogma.—a) Conception (*conceptio*) may be taken either actively or passively.

Active conception (*concipere, conceptio activa*) is the parental act of generation. Passive conception (*concipi, conceptio passiva*) is the origin of a human being in the maternal womb. A child comes into being at the moment when the intellectual soul is infused into the product of parental generation (embryo, fœtus). In speaking of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, therefore, we do not mean the procreative act of her saintly parents (which may or may not have been tainted by inordinate concupiscence), but simply and solely the creative act by which Almighty God infused her immaculate soul into the corporeal receptacle which had been prepared for it by Joachim and Anna. In other words, by a most extraordinary privilege the soul of our Lady was from the first instant of her existence preserved from all stain of original sin.

b) The fact that Mary was preserved from

original sin does not necessarily imply that she was exempt from the universal necessity or need of being subject to it (*debitum peccati originalis*).

Theologians generally hold that, though she was *de facto* exempt from original sin, Mary incurred the *debitum contrahendi,* because else her Immaculate Conception would not be an effect of the atonement.

We may distinguish a twofold *debitum,* proximate and remote. *Debitum remotum* merely signifies membership in the human race, based on the ordinary mode of propagation, *i. e.,* sexual generation. *Debitum proximum* involves inclusion in the wilful act by which Adam, as the representative of the whole race, rejected the grace of God and implicated human nature in sin. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception is sufficiently safeguarded by admitting that Mary was subject to the *debitum remotum.* The view of some older Scotist theologians, that she had not even so much as a *debitum remotum incurrendi peccatum originale,* cannot be reconciled with the solemn formula by which Pope Pius IX defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

Is it necessary to admit that there was also a *debitum proximum?* The majority of Catholic divines, following Suarez,[1] contend that it is. The assumption of such a *debitum,* involving as it does the exemption of one sole individual from a strictly binding universal law, constitutes the Immaculate Conception a miracle and a far higher grace than it would be in the opposite hypothesis; but it does not sufficiently safeguard the soul of our Lady against the possibility of contamination.[2]

1 *De Myst. Vitae Christi,* disp. 3, sect. 2.

2 Cfr. Bucceroni, *Commentarii . . . de B. Virgine Maria,* 4th ed., pp. 65 sqq., Rome 1896.

c) The dogma expressly says that our Lady owed her freedom from original sin entirely to the redemptive merits of her Divine Son. Like all other human beings, she had need of a redeemer, though the manner of her redemption differed from that of the common run. She was preserved from original sin by a special and altogether unique privilege.

As this privilege is based entirely on her dignity as Mother of God, it would be rash to assume that it was granted also to other Saints, *e. g.*, John the Baptist or St. Joseph. Inasmuch as Mary never even for one moment contracted the slightest taint of original sin, theologians commonly speak of her redemption as *redemptio anticipata* or *praeredemptio* (sometimes also *praemundatio*). This Preredemption, according to Catholic teaching, formally consisted in the infusion of sanctifying grace into her soul immediately after its creation. In other words, the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, like that of our First Parents in Paradise,[3] was simultaneous with her creation.

d) All these momenta are embodied in the definition enunciated by Pius IX in his famous Bull *"Ineffabilis Deus,"* of December 8th, 1854: "We define that the doctrine which declares that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted to her by Almighty God, through

3 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *God the Author of Nature and the Supernatural,* p. 199, St. Louis 1912.

the merits of Christ Jesus, Saviour of mankind, was preserved from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore must be held firmly and constantly by all faithful Christians." [4]

The Bull not only defines the dogma, but declares that it is "revealed by God." The subject of this singular privilege is the person of Mary; it has nothing to do with her progenitors. The privilege itself consists in Mary's actual preservation from original sin through the merits of Jesus Christ.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception is rejected by the Anglicans, and by Protestants generally, also by many schismatics and the so-called Old Catholics.[5]

2. Proof from Sacred Scripture.—The dogma of the Immaculate Conception is not expressly enunciated in Sacred Scripture, but, as Father S. J. Hunter justly observes, "this circumstance will have no weight against its acceptance, except with those who assume, without a scrap of reason, that the whole of the revelation given by God is contained in the inspired Books." [6]

[4] *"Definimus doctrinam, quae tenet Beatam Virginem Mariam in primo instanti suae conceptionis fuisse singulari omnipotentis Dei gratiâ et privilegio, intuitu meritorum Christi Iesu Salvatoris humani generis, ab omni originalis culpae labe praeservatam immunem, esse a Deo revelatam atque idcirco ab omnibus fidelibus firmiter constanterque credendam."* (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1641.)

[5] See Edw. Preuss, *Zum Lobe der unbefleckten Empfängnis von Einem, der sie vormals gelästert hat,* Freiburg 1879 (cfr. Pohle, *Lehrbuch der Dogmatik,* 5th ed., "Vorwort," Paderborn 1912).

[6] *Outlines of Dogmatic Theology,* Vol. II, p. 553, 2nd ed.

The Bull *"Ineffabilis"* cites two important texts, which certainly point to the Blessed Virgin as the recipient of some extraordinary spiritual favor, —a favor which cannot be fully explained by anything short of the dogma of her Immaculate Conception. True, the exegetical argument from these texts, taken by itself, scarcely exceeds the limits of probability; but the lack of Scriptural evidence can be abundantly supplied from the writings of the Fathers.

a) The so-called Protevangelium (Gen. III, 14 sq.) runs as follows: *"Et ait Dominus Deus ad serpentem: . . . Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem* (הָאִשָּׁה), *et semen tuum et semen illius: ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo eius*—And the Lord God said to the serpent: . . . I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." The Hebrew text has: "he [הוּא] shall crush thy head, and thou shalt crush his heel." The only difference between the two versions is that, whereas the Vulgate describes "the woman" as crushing the serpent, the original Hebrew text, by employing a male pronoun, ascribes this act to "the seed of the woman." The Septuagint agrees with the Hebrew, rendering the passage as follows: αὐτός σου τηρήσει κεφαλήν, καὶ σὺ τηρήσεις αὐτοῦ πτέραν. This diversity does not, however,

affect the dogmatic argument, which may be formulated thus:

According to the wellnigh unanimous interpretation of the Fathers, beginning with St. Justin Martyr and St. Ignatius of Antioch, the "serpent crusher" is a determinate person, namely our Divine Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, and the woman whose enmity is destined to prove fatal to the serpent, is the Blessed Virgin Mary. These two persons are opposed to two other beings, *viz.*, the serpent, who is none other than Satan, and his "seed," *i. e.*, his clientèle of sinners.[7] God Himself has "put enmity" between these two pairs, Christ and His mother on the one side, and Satan and his followers on the other,—an enmity which will ultimately end in victory for the former and destruction for the latter. Mary, being on the side of Christ, with the same enmity between her and Satan as that which exists between the latter and her Divine Son, must also share in His triumph. This would not be the case had she, even for a single moment, been tainted by original sin; for in that hypothesis Satan would have triumphed over her, and she would have been, at least temporarily, his friend and ally, and the Protogospel would consequently be untrue. It follows that, viewed in

7 Cfr. Matth. III, 7; John VIII, 44; Acts XIII, 10; 1 John III, 8. On the Protevangelium, see A. J. Maas, S. J., *Christ in Type and Prophecy*, Vol. I, pp. 184 sqq., New York 1893.

the light of Christian tradition, the Protevangelium foreshadows not only the victory achieved by Christ through the atonement, but implicitly also the Immaculate Conception of His Blessed Mother.[8]

b) Leaving the Old Testament, we proceed to consider the Angelic Salutation, Luke I, 28: "Hail, full of grace," in connection with the words addressed to our Lady by Elizabeth, Luke I, 42: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."[9] Gabriel's greeting represents the divine favor enjoyed by the Blessed Virgin as the highest form of grace consistent with her state, and when Elizabeth, "filled with the Holy Ghost," hailed Mary as the "mother of my Lord," she did not pronounce a conventional salutation, but wished to say (as the Greek translation ἐν γυναιξίν of a Hebrew superlative plainly indicates): "Thou art the only blessed one among women, because the 'fruit of thy womb' is the Son of God." We have shown in a previous chapter that Mary, as the mother of God, was "full of grace." She would have lacked the ful-

8 For further information on this subject see Palmieri, *De Deo Creante et Elevante*, thes. 87, Rome 1878; G. B. Tepe, *Instit. Theol.*, Vol. III, pp. 688 sqq., Paris 1896; Al. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift*, pp. 101 sqq., p. 116 (Engl. tr., pp. 108 sqq.); Fr. X. Patrizi, *De Immaculata Mariae Origine a Deo Praedicta Disquisitio*, Rome 1854; Legnani, *De Secunda Eva, Commentarius in Protoevangelium*, Venice 1888; Arendt, S. J., *De Protevangelii Habitudine ad Immaculatam Deiparae Conceptionem*, Rome 1904.

9 εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν, καὶ εὐλογημένος ὁ καρπὸς τῆς κοιλίας σου.

ness of grace had she not, from the first instant of her existence, been entirely exempt from sin. In other words, her *plenitudo gratiae* [10] must be conceived as unlimited in intensity as well as duration.

Rightly, therefore, does Martin Luther remark of our Lady: "We could not say to her: 'Blessed art thou,' if she had at any time been subject to malediction." [11] Thus conceived, the prerogative of *plenitudo gratiae* as well as the "blessedness" of Mary logically include her Immaculate Conception, as a cause includes its effect or an antecedent its consequent.

This argument is confirmed by the traditional antithesis, so often emphasized by the Fathers and Catholic divines, between Mary and Eve. "Hail [Mary]," says Pope Innocent III (d. 1216), "because through thee the name of Eve is changed. Eve was full of sin, but thou art full of grace; Eve withdrew from God, but God is with thee; Eve was cursed, but thou art blessed among women; through Eve death entered the world, through thee life returned." [12] This antithetical comparison would be meaningless had Mary ever, even for one brief moment, made common cause, as it were, with Adam's sinful spouse.[13]

10 *V. supra*, pp. 24 sqq.

11 "*Man könnte zu ihr nicht sprechen: 'Gebenedeit bist du,' wenn sie je unter der Maledeiung gelegen wäre.*" (*Kirchenpostille*, 1527.)

12 Innocent III, *Sermo de Virg. Purif.*: "*Ave, quia per te mutabitur nomen Evae; illa fuit plena peccato, sed tu plena gratiâ; illa recessit a Deo, sed Dominus tecum; illa fuit maledicta in mulieribus, sed tu benedicta; per illam mors intravit in orbem, sed per te vita rediit ad orbem.*"

13 This consideration is beautifully developed by Al. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift*, pp. 118 sqq., 123 sqq. (Engl. tr., 113 sqq.)

3. The Argument from Tradition.—The ecclesiastical tradition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception plainly falls into two separate and distinct stages. The first may be termed that of quiet and undisputed possession. It extends up to the time of the famous controversy which broke out in 1140. The second period is characterized by a gradual clarification of the dogma in the minds of the faithful, and ends with its solemn definition by Pope Pius IX, A. D. 1854.

a) During the first period (from about 250 to 1100) the Orient, on the whole, gives evidence of a much clearer conception of the dogma than the West, though the Latins no doubt virtually believed in the Immaculate Conception. Perhaps it is not too much to say that, had the Schoolmen following St. Anselm known the writings of the Greek Fathers as well as we know them to-day, they would never have opposed the dogma.[14]

α) Both the Oriental and the Latin churches held in common, as part of their primitive tradition, two central ideas, in which the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was implicitly contained. These fundamental conceptions were: (1) Mary's transcendent purity, and (2) the striking contrast between her and Eve, so similar to that existing between Christ and Adam.

14 Cfr. Perrone, *De Immaculato B. Virginis Mariae Conceptu,* P. II, cap. 5, Rome 1847.

In regard to the first of these principles, the dogmatic Bull of Pius IX says:

"*Atque haec quidem doctrina adeo maiorum mentes animosque occupavit, ut singularis et omnino mirus penes illos invaluerit loquendi usus, quo Deiparam saepissime compellarunt immaculatam, omnique ex parte immaculatam, innocentem et innocentissimam, illibatam et undequaque illibatam, sanctam et ab omni peccati sorde alienissimam, totam puram, totam intemeratam ac ipsam prope puritatis et innocentiae formam, pulchritudine pulchriorem, venustate venustiorem, sanctiorem sanctitate solamque sanctam purissimamque animâ et corpore, quae supergressa est omnem integritatem et virginitatem, ac sola tota facta est domicilium universarum gratiarum Sanctissimi Spiritus et quae, solo Deo excepto, exstitit cunctis superior et ipsis Cherubim et Seraphim et omni exercitu angelorum naturâ pulchrior, formosior et sanctior, cui praedicandae coelestes et terrenae linguae minime sufficiunt.*" [15]

It is impossible to assume that the early Christians believed Mary to have been subject to original sin, since the Fathers of both the Greek and the Latin Church extol her as "all-holy," "a virginal paradise preserved from the curse of God," "a virgin without the slightest taint of sin," "a miracle of grace, holier and purer than the angels," etc., etc. No matter how highly we may rate the sanctity of a converted sinner, it would be untrue to say that he is absolutely stainless. For the sins which he has committed never cease to overshadow his life. To compare Mary's sanctity to the immaculate purity of the glorious seraphs, nay, to exalt it in unmeasured terms above that purity, is but one

15 The Patristic texts upon which this eulogy is based may be found in Passaglia and Palmieri.

remove from the formal declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

The dogma may also be logically deduced from the Patristic conception of Mary as the second Eve. As Adam was the counterpart of Christ,[16] so Eve was the antithesis of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Or, to express the same truth somewhat differently: As Eve, in conjunction with Adam, embodies the principle of sin, so Mary, in conjunction with Christ, represents the well-spring of sanctity and righteousness. If the Blessed Virgin, as the anti-type of Eve, essentially participates in the sanctity of her Divine Son, she cannot possibly have been tainted by original sin; else the Scriptural parallel would be meaningless.

What renders this deduction even more convincing is the fact that the Fathers, not content with opposing Mary to sinful Eve, put her on a par with our proto-mother while yet in the state of original justice, that is to say, conceived her as equally holy in origin with "the mother of all the living."

This significant parallel between Eve and our Blessed Lady is found, as a part of the traditional deposit of faith, in the writings of the earliest Fathers and ecclesiastical writers, beginning with St. Justin Martyr, St. Irenæus, and Tertullian, down to St. John of Damascus. We will quote a few characteristic passages.

"The First-born of the Father before all creatures," says St. Justin Martyr, "became a man through the Virgin, that by what way the disobedience arising from the serpent had its beginning, by that way also it might have its undoing. For Eve, being a virgin and undefiled, conceiving the word that was from the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death; but the Virgin Mary, tak-

16 Cfr. Rom. V, 14 sqq.

ing faith and joy, when the Angel told her the good tidings . . . answered: 'Let it be done unto me according to thy word.'"[17] This is "truly a most remarkable utterance in the mouth of a writer who flourished in the middle of the second century."[18]

Tertullian[19] says: "For into Eve, as yet a virgin, had crept the word which was the framer of death. Equally into a virgin was to be introduced the Word of God, which was the builder-up of life; that, what by that sex had gone into perdition might by the same sex be brought back to salvation. Eve had believed the Serpent, Mary believed Gabriel; what Eve sinned by faith, Mary atoned by faith."[20]

In the East, St. Ephrem Syrus (+ 373) gives expression to a similar thought: "Those two innocent, those two simple women, Mary and Eve, had been indeed created quite equal, but afterwards one became the cause of our death, the other of our life."[21]

Theodotus of Ancyra (d. about 445), a friend and fellow-combatant of St. Cyril of Alexandria, says: "Instead of the virgin Eve, who was unto us the instrument

17 *Dial. c. Tryph.*, c. 100. The translation is substantially Newman's ("A Letter Addressed to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., on Occasion of His Eirenicon," reprinted in *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching Considered,* Vol. II, p. 33).

18 O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur,* Vol. I, p. 236, Freiburg 1902.

19 *De Carne Christi,* c. 17. "*In virginem enim adhuc Evam irrepserat verbum exstructorium vitae, ut quod per eiusmodi sexum abierat in perditionem, per eundem sexum redigeretur in salutem. Crediderat Eva serpenti, credidit Maria Gabrieli; quod illa credendo deliquit, haec credendo delevit.*"

20 Cfr. St. Irenæus, *Adv. Haer.*, III, 22, 4; V, 19, 1. (The passages translated by Newman, *l. c.*, pp. 34 sq. Cfr. also Bardenhewer, *op. cit.*, pp. 520 sq.)

21 "*Duae innocentes, duae simplices, Maria et Eva, sibi quidem prorsus aequales factae erant; postea vero altera facta est causa mortis, altera vitae nostrae.*" (*Op. Syr.*, II, 327.) Apposite texts from the liturgy of the Syrian Church will be found *apud* Holeika, *Témoignages de l'Église Syro-Maronite en Faveur de l'Immaculée Conception,* Beirut 1904.

of death, God, for the purpose of giving life, chose a virgin most pleasing to Himself and full of grace, who, included in woman's sex, was free from woman's sin, a virgin innocent, without taint, holy in soul and body, as a lily budding in the midst of thorns, unlearned in the evils of Eve, . . . who was a daughter of Adam, but unlike him." [22]

The same belief inspired St. John of Damascus when he wrote: "Hail, thou the only blessed one among women, who hast repaired the fall of our first mother Eve. . . . Hail, thou who art truly full of grace, because thou art holier than the angels and more excellent than the archangels. . . . Hail, thou full of grace, because thou art more beautiful than the Cherubim and more exalted than the Seraphim. . . . Hail, full of grace, thou who art higher than heaven and purer than the sun which we behold." [23]

β) A careful analysis of these central ideas naturally led to the explicit conclusion that the Blessed Mother of God must have been pure and holy also in her origin. This conclusion, though not formally equivalent to an enunciation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, differed but little if anything from it materially. Its logical development was partly theoretical, by

22 "*Loco virginis Evae, quae nobis instrumentum mortis facta est, Deus elegit ad dandam vitam Virginem sibi placentissimam et gratiâ plenam, quae femina existens ab iniquitate feminae aliena fuit, Virginem innocentem, immaculatam, sanctam spiritu et corpore, productam ut lilium inter spinas, quae non novit mala Evae, . . . quae fuit filia Adam, sed ipsi dissimilis.*" (*Hom. in S. Deiparam*, VI, n. 11, *apud* Gallandi, *Bibliotheca Vet. Patrum Antiquorumque Script. Eccles.*, Venice 1765–81, Vol. IX, 475.)

23 *Hom. in Annunt. B. M. V.*, II. For a fuller treatment of this topic see Hurter, *Compend. Theol. Dogm.*, Vol. II, n. 631 sqq., Innsbruck 1896.

means of express doctrinal judgments, and partly practical, through the introduction of the festival of the Immaculate Conception.

The theoretical development of the dogma is sufficiently illustrated by the following quotations.

St. Hippolytus (about 220), who was a pupil of St. Irenæus, says: "The ark which was made of indestructible timber (cfr. Ex. XXV, 10 sqq.), was the Redeemer Himself. The ark symbolized His tent [body], which was impervious to decay and engendered no sinful corruption. . . . The Lord was sinless, because, according to His humanity, He was fashioned from indestructible wood, *i. e.*, out of the Virgin and the Holy Ghost, lined within and without with the purest gold of the Logos."[24] Dr. Bardenhewer remarks on this passage: "This juxtaposition of our Lord and the Virgin as the only sinless representatives of the human race, constitutes the characteristic form in which the Immaculate Conception was taught in the early days."[25]

Dionysius the Great of Alexandria (about 250) wrote against Paul of Samosata: "Christ did not live in a servile tent, but in His holy ark . . . and He preserved His mother as one who was blessed from head to foot, undefiled, even as He alone knew the manner of her conception and birth."[26]

Our classic witness is again St. Ephrem Syrus (about 370), who represents the Church of Edessa as addressing the Lord Jesus Christ in these words: "Thou and Thy mother are the only [human beings] that are per-

24 Quoted by Theodoret, *Dial.*, 1 (Migne, *P. G.*, X, 863).

25 *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, Vol. II, p. 553, Freiburg 1903.

26 *Ep. adv. Paul. Samosat.*

fectly beautiful in every respect; for there is no spot in Thee, O Lord, nor any taint in Thy mother." [27]

There is an alleged "Report of the Priests and Deacons of Achaia on the Martyrdom of St. Andrew," [28] which used to be quoted as the most ancient Patristic testimony in support of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.[29] We know now that this report is probably no older than the fifth century. But even as a document of the fifth century it is not without value. It contains this characteristic passage: "Because the first man [Adam] was created of undefiled earth [*i. e.,* earth which had not yet been cursed], . . . it was necessary that out of an immaculate Virgin there should be born the perfect man, the Son of God."

St. Augustine's attitude in regard to this question is of special interest. He taught (1) that, as a rule, original sin precedes personal sin, and (2) that the Blessed Virgin Mary alone of all human beings was personally sinless. These premises implicitly contain the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. But St. Augustine never formally drew this conclusion. Julian of Eclanum accused him of treating the Deipara with even greater disrespect than the heretic Jovinian: "He [Jovinian] makes Mary's virginity come to an end owing to the law of parturition, you transfer Mary herself to the Devil's book, owing to the law of birth;" [30] to which the saintly Bishop replied: [31] "We do not transfer Mary to the Devil's book owing to the law of birth; but the reason we do not, is that this law is broken by the grace of being born

27 *Carm. Nisib.,* n. 27, ed. G. Bickell, p. 122, Lipsiae 1866.

28 Its text in Migne, *P. G.,* II, 1226.

29 Cfr. Bardenhewer-Shahan, *Patrology,* p. 104.

30 "*Ille virginitatem Mariae partûs conditione dissolvit, tu ipsam Mariam diabolo nascendi conditione transcribis.*"

31 "*Non transcribimus diabolo Mariam conditione nascendi, sed*

again." What else can this mean if not: Mary ought by right to have been conceived in original sin, but the grace of God preserved her pure and holy.[32]

γ) The popular belief in the Immaculate Conception manifested itself at a comparatively early date by the introduction into the liturgy of a distinct festival. This was known at first as *Conceptio Sanctae Annae.*

The reference to it in the *Typikon S. Sabae* (composed about 485) is spurious, but the festival undoubtedly became popular in the Orient as early as the second half of the seventh century, for a hymn written by St. Andrew of Crete (d. about 720) bears the inscription: "*Die nona Decembris Conceptio Sanctae ac Dei Aviae Annae.*" In the West the feast of the Immaculate Conception was celebrated about the year 840 in the kingdom of Naples and Sicily, whither it had no doubt been transplanted from the Orient. In England the festival was observed before the Norman Conquest,[33] though it did not spread widely in that country till the time of Abbot Anselm of St. Edmundsbury, who was a cousin of St. Anselm (d. 1109). Irish Catholics probably celebrated the feast of the Immaculate Conception as early as 900.[34]

ideo [non transcribimus], quia ipsa conditio nascendi solvitur gratiâ renascendi." (*Op. Imperf. contra Iulian.*, IV, n. 122.)

32 Cfr. Th. Livius, C. SS. R., *The Blessed Virgin in the Fathers of the First Six Centuries*, pp. 243 sqq., London 1893. For a solution of certain other Patristic difficulties we must refer the student to Pesch, *Praelect. Dogmat.*, Vol. III, 3rd ed., pp. 170 sq., Freiburg 1908.

33 The evidence for this is given by Edmund Bishop in his tract, *On the Origins of the Feast of the Conception of the Bl. Virgin Mary*, London 1904. Cfr. also Kellner, *Heortology* (English ed.), Appendix X: "English Writers and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception," pp. 445-7.

34 Cfr. H. Thurston, S. J., "The Irish Origins of Our Lady's Conception Feast," in the *Month*, 1904, I, pp. 449 sqq.

When the festival began to make its way from Italy to Gaul, in the twelfth century, a famous theological controversy arose as to its lawfulness. This was, however, confined to the circle of the learned and never affected the masses of the people. The cult of the *Immaculata* steadily grew more popular and finally struck root in Rome, where the feast was first observed in the fourteenth century.[35]

In celebrating this festival the faithful did not mean to honor the Blessed Virgin as one who, like St. John the Baptist, had been cleansed from original sin in the maternal womb,[36] but as originally conceived without the slightest stain.[37]

b) The second period of the controversy, which led to a general clarification of ideas in the Western world—the East never wavered in its belief in the Immaculate Conception—began in 1140, when St. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote his famous letter to the Canons of Lyons, who had begun to celebrate the feast of our Lady's Conception without having the authority of the Holy See for this "innovation."

α) St. Bernard insisted that nothing but what is "holy" can be the object of devotion, and in a vehement letter warned the Canons against the absurdity of cele-

35 Cfr. Benedict XIV, *De Festis B. Virginis*, c. 15, n. 21.— On the institution and spread of the Festival of the Immaculate Conception see especially Kellner, *Heortology*, pp. 239–264, London 1908.

36 There was such a feast in honor of St. Elizabeth: *Festum Conceptionis S. Elisabeth.*

37 Cfr. Palmieri, *De Deo Creante et Elevante*, thes. 84; Kellner, *Heortology*, pp. 241 sqq. On the ancient liturgies see Tepe, *Instit. Theolog.*, Vol. III, p. 699, Paris 1896.

brating a "false sanctity," that is, the sanctity of a being not yet existing, or, what would be still worse, "sin," *i. e.*, the carnal act of Mary's parents. Hence, while he raised no objection to the feast of our Lady's nativity, he did protest against celebrating her "immaculate conception."—"No doubt," he wrote, "the mother of God was holy even before she was born, and the Church is by no means mistaken in keeping holy the day of her birth . . . But she could not be holy before she existed, as she did not exist before she was conceived. Or did sanctity perhaps commingle with her conception so that she was sanctified and conceived at one and the same time? . . . Or are we to assume that there was no sin [concupiscence] where there was sensual delectation? Or will some one perhaps say that Mary was not conceived of a man but of the Holy Ghost? But this is something hitherto unheard of." [38]

If we take the term conception in its active sense (*conceptio activa sive seminalis*) in contradistinction and opposition to passive conception (*conceptio passiva sive personalis*), which coincides with the creation of the spiritual soul and its infusion into the fœtus, St. Bernard was undoubtedly right in demanding that the conception of our Lady be excluded from public and private worship. But he went too far when he argued: "Hence, if Mary could not be sanctified before her conception, since she was not yet in existence, nor in the act of conception itself,

38 "*Fuit procul dubio et mater Domini ante sancta quam nata, nec fallitur omnino sancta ecclesia sanctam reputans ipsum nativitatis eius diem. . . . Sed non valuit ante sancta esse quam esse, siquidem non erat, antequam conciperetur. An forte inter amplexus maritales sanctitas se ipsi conceptui immiscuit, ut simul et sanctificata fuerit et concepta? . . . Aut certe peccatum* [*scil. concupiscentia*] *quomodo non fuit, ubi libido non defuit? Nisi forte quis dicat de Spiritu sancto eam et non de viro conceptam fuisse: sed id hactenus inauditum.*" (*Ep., ad Canonicos Lugd.*, n. 5 sqq., *apud* Migne, *P. L.*, CLXXXII, 333.)

on account of the sin [concupiscence] involved therein, it follows that she was sanctified in the womb after conception, which, since she was cleansed from sin, made her nativity holy, not her conception." [39] This argument is fallacious, because it ignores a fourth possibility, namely the sanctification of Mary's soul in the instant of its creation (*conceptio passiva personalis*).

What led a number of medieval theologians to oppose the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was that they misunderstood the real point at issue. Instead of endlessly harping on the query: "Was the Blessed Virgin Mary sanctified before or after the infusion of her soul into her body?" they should have formulated the problem thus: "Was the soul of the Blessed Virgin sanctified at the moment of its creation?" But they disregarded this intrinsic possibility, on which the dogma of the Immaculate Conception rests. It never occurred to them to put the question thus, because, while they firmly believed that the Blessed Virgin Mary stood as much in need of redemption as the rest of humankind, they were unable to conceive redemption otherwise than as a cleansing from original sin with which all men are born into the world. Had the Scholastics generally per-

39 *L. c.*, n. 7: "*Si igitur* [*Maria*] *ante conceptum sui sanctificari minime potuit, quoniam non erat, sed nec in ipso quidem conceptu propter peccatum quod inerat* [*i. e. concupiscentiam*], *restat ut post conceptum in utero iam existens sanctificationem accepisse credatur, quae excluso peccato sanctam fecerit nativitatem, non tamen et conceptionem.*" — "St. Bernard," comments Archbishop Ullathorne (*The Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God,* Revised ed. by Canon Iles, London 1905, pp. 135 sq.), "is clearly arguing upon the notion of the active conception, which the Church does not contemplate in the mystery. Hence Albert the Great observes: 'We say that the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before animation, and the affirmative contrary to this is the heresy condemned by St. Bernard in his epistle to the canons of Lyons' (In III, dist. 3, art. 4). And St. Bonaventure also says that from St. Bernard's words 'it is simply to be conceded that her flesh was not sanctified before animation' (In III, dist. 3, p. 1, a. 1, qu. 1)."

ceived, what the subtle mind of Scotus saw so clearly, *viz.:* that redemption may be conceived as *preredemption* (preservation or prevention), they would undoubtedly have been unanimous in deducing the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as a logical conclusion from the traditional teaching on the perpetual and absolute sinlessness of Mary. It has been said of St. Thomas that he virtually held the conclusions which he formally combatted in his Mariological discussions, and this is equally true of all other Scholastic theologians who thought it their duty to oppose the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.[40]

β) St. Bernard's letter to the Canons of Lyons drew forth emphatic protests from such learned and pious theologians as Friar Nicholas of St. Alban's.[41] But these protests remained unheeded, until the famous Franciscan Duns Scotus (d. 1308) refuted the chief objection that had been raised against the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Had the "Subtle Doctor" and his school done nothing else for the Catholic cause than to defend and successfully establish this dogma, they would deserve a place of honor in the history of medieval theology.

Scotus argued as follows: "He who is the most perfect mediator must have a most perfect act of mediation in regard to some person on whose behalf he exercises his

40 On the attitude of St. Thomas, cfr. Archbishop Ullathorne, *The Immaculate Conception*, p. 137: "His great difficulty appears to have arisen on the question how she could have been redeemed if she had not sinned. This difficulty he has raised in not fewer than ten passages of his writings. But whilst St. Thomas thus held back from the essential point of the doctrine, it is most worthy to be remarked that he himself laid down the principles which, after they had been drawn together, and worked out through a longer course of thought, enabled other minds to furnish the true solution of his difficulty from his own premises."

41 Cfr. Migne, *P. L.*, CCII, 617 sqq.

mediatorial office. Now Christ is a most perfect mediator . . . and He had no more exalted relation to any person than to the B. V. Mary. . . . This could not be, had He not merited for her preservation from original sin." [42]

The subtle difficulty that Mary was a daughter of Adam before she could become an adopted daughter of God, and therefore must necessarily have experienced the taint of original sin, Scotus solved by applying the Scholastic distinction between *ordo naturae* and *ordo temporis*.[43] In the order of nature, he argued, Mary was a daughter of Adam before she was justified; but in the order of time her sanctification coincided with the creation of her soul. In elaborating this idea he employs a beautiful simile. "Some," he says, "have been raised up after they had fallen, but the Virgin Mary was, as it were, sustained in the very act of falling, and prevented from falling, like the two men who were about to tumble into a pit." [44]

The strength of the Scotistic argument lies mainly in the concept of *praeredemptio*. Preredemption, Scotus contends, is possible, because absolutely speaking God can infuse grace without the expulsion of any previously existing sin.[45] Preredemption was a fit mode of preserving the Blessed Virgin from sin, because she was the mother of God, and as such could never be at enmity

42 "*Perfectissimus mediator habet perfectissimum actum mediandi respectu alicuius personae, pro qua mediat. Sed Christus est perfectissimus mediator. . . . Sed respectu nullius personae habuit excellentiorem gradum quam respectu Mariae. . . . Sed hoc non esset, nisi meruisset eam praeservari a peccato originali.*" (*Comment. in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*, III, dist. 3, qu. 1, n. 4.)

43 *L. c.*, qu. 1, n. 15 sqq.

44 "*Alii post casum erecti sunt, virgo Maria quasi in ipso casu sustenta est, ne rueret, sicut exemplum ponitur de duobus cadentibus in luto*" (*l. c.*, n. 2).

45 "*Absolute posset esse infusio gratiae sine expulsione alicuius culpae praecedentis, sicut fuit in b. Virgine.*" (*Rep.*, IV, dist. 16, qu. 2, n. 26.)

with God, which would have been the case, for a time at least, had she not been preserved from original sin.[46]

The Scotists nearly all followed the lead of their master. Among the zealous Franciscan defenders of the Immaculate Conception two deserve special mention: Peter Aureolus (d. 1322), and Francis Mayron (d. 1327), who wrote copiously in defense of the famous syllogism: "*Potuit, decuit, ergo fecit,*" that is to say: It was becoming that the Mother of the Redeemer should be free from the power of sin and Satan from the first moment of her existence; it was in God's power to give her this privilege; therefore he gave it.[47]

γ) It was due solely to the ancient feud between the Franciscans and the Dominicans that the latter now sharply renewed their opposition to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception with a special appeal to the authority of St. Thomas. Some Dominican divines even went so far as to censure the Scotist view as heretical. The opposition, which was at first conducted with prudent moderation by men of the stamp of Cardinal Torquemada (1388-1468), eventually developed into a veritable *furor theologicus.* Bondelli (1481) and Bartholomew Spina (d. 1546) were particularly vehement. Besides such moderate opponents as Cardinal Cajetan (1469-1534), Francis a Sylvestris (1474-1528), and Bartholomew de Medina (1528-1581), the Order of St. Dominic, at this critical juncture, also furnished a few defenders of the doctrine, notably Ambrosius Catharinus (1487-1553), John a S. Thoma (1589-1644), and Natalis Alexander (1639-1724).

46 "*Mater Dei, quae nunquam fuit inimica actualiter ratione peccati actualis nec ratione originalis; fuisset tamen, nisi fuisset praeservata.*" (*Comment. in Quatuor Libros Sent.*, III, dist. 18, qu. 1, n. 13).

47 Scotus, *Comment. in Quatuor Libros Sent.*, III, dist. 3.

The first serious attempt to upset the authority of St. Thomas and to blaze a way for the doctrine of the Scotists, which was constantly strengthening its claims, was made by Seraphine Capponi della Porretta, O. P. (1536–1614), who endeavored to show that the Angelic Doctor had been an advocate, or at least no opponent, of the Immaculate Conception. When, in process of time, the Thomistic position was gradually perceived to be untenable, the Thomists one by one retired from the fray and tried to interpret St. Thomas in favor of the Scotistic doctrine, as the Jesuits had done from the beginning. Already before the foundation of the Society of Jesus, Cardinal Cajetan had observed that "among modern theologians the number of those who hold that the Blessed Virgin was preserved from original sin, is infinite."[48] The Jesuit Peter Canisius (1521–1597) could truthfully say of his own time: "Very few now hold the contrary opinion, and these are ashamed to speak their mind openly and consider it dangerous to profess their belief in public. If they dared to speak out, they would meet with public contradiction and give offense to the people; to such a degree has the opinion adverse to the Immaculate Conception been weakened, exploded, and as it were cast out."[49]

Those who had opposed the doctrine withdrew before long to their lecture rooms, while the Christian populace

48 "*Doctores tenentes B. Virginem esse praeservatam a peccato originali, sunt numero infiniti, si ad modernos spectemus.*" (*Opusc. de Concept. Virg. ad Leonem X.*)

49 Canisius, *De Maria Deipara*, I, 7: "*Qui secus modo sentiunt, eorum sane rarus est numerus, hique pudore impediti, quod in animo gerunt et secum ipsi tacite loquuntur ac sentiunt, palam efferre ac pronuntiare non satis tutum arbitrantur; tum, si id facere quidem audeant, haud sine publica contradictione vulgique offensione audiuntur: usque adeo et invisa et debilitata et explosa et quodammodo eiecta est penitus nunc opinio adversariorum.*"

continued to profess the Immaculate Conception with constantly increasing fervor.

δ) Thus the process of clarification, which had begun in the twelfth century, gradually took its course, the Church either urging on or restraining the combatants, as prudence dictated.

The Council of Bâsle (1439), in its thirty-sixth session, declared the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception to be the official teaching of the Church. Though not a binding definition (for the Council was at that time without a head), this declaration attests the belief of the fifteenth century.

Sixtus IV, by a decree dated February 28, 1476, granted indulgences to all who recited the canonical office or assisted at the Mass of the Immaculate Conception,[50] and when this did not abate the conflict, in 1483 issued an Apostolic Constitution (*"Grave nimis"*) in which he threatened to excommunicate all those of either school who dared to charge their opponents with heresy.

The Council of Trent left the question where Sixtus IV had put it, but "declared that it is not the intention of this holy Synod to include in the decree which treats of original sin the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God, but that the constitutions of Pope Sixtus IV,

50 The festival of the Immaculate Conception was not raised to the rank of a festival of obligation until the latter half of the sixteenth century,— in 1568, by Pope Pius V.

of happy memory, are to be observed under the pains inflicted by the said constitutions, which it [the Tridentine Council] renews." [51]

In 1567, Pope St. Pius V condemned the proposition (No. 73) of Baius, that "no one but Christ was without original sin, and that therefore the Blessed Virgin died in consequence of the sin contracted through Adam, and endured afflictions in this life, like the rest of the just, as punishments for actual and original sin." [52] A year later the same Pope made the feast of the Immaculate Conception a holyday of obligation for the entire Church.

Paul V, in 1616, forbade public discussion of the subject in pulpit and rostrum, and Gregory XV, in 1622, imposed absolute silence on all parties, with but one exception in favor of the Dominicans, who were permitted to debate the Immaculate Conception in private.

Finally, Pope Alexander VII, by the famous Constitution *"Solicitudo,"* of December 8, 1661,

51 *Sess. V, sub fin.: "Declarat tamen haec ipsa S. Synodus, non esse suae intentionis comprehendere in hoc decreto, ubi de peccato originali agitur, beatam et immaculatam Virginem Mariam, Dei genitricem, sed observandas esse constitutiones felicis recordationis Sixti Papae IV. sub poenis in eis constitutionibus contentis, quas innovat."* On the proceedings of the Council with regard to this question see S. Merkle, *Concil. Trident., I: Diaria,* t. I, pp. 64 sqq., Friburgi 1901.

52 *"Nemo praeter Christum est absque peccato originali; hinc B. Virgo mortua est propter peccatum ex Adam contractum omnesque eius afflictiones in hac vita, sicut et aliorum iustorum, fuerunt ultiones peccati actualis vel originalis."* (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1073.)

renewed all the decrees of his predecessors and subjected the writings of those who attacked the Immaculate Conception to the rules of the Roman Index.[53]

From this time on the question was ripe for a final decision; but it was not until nearly two centuries later that Pope Pius IX formally defined and promulgated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

4. THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT.—The theological argument for the dogma of the Immaculate Conception rests entirely on reasons of fitness, *viz.:* (a) due regard for the infinite majesty and honor of the Divine Logos, for whose sake our Lady was preserved from sin, and (b) the exalted dignity of her divine motherhood.[54]

a) The Immaculate Conception constitutes a most extraordinary personal privilege, which our Lady received not for her own sake but for the sake of Christ. As the glory of a child reflects honor on his parents, so the shame of a parent brings disgrace upon the child.[55] Hence any sinful taint in Mary would have reflected unfavorably on her Divine Son. Besides, the granting of such an extraordinary privilege to His mother redounds to the glory of Christ in His capacity of Redeemer. Far from

53 Cfr. B. Plazza, *Causa Immac. Concept.*, pp. 390 sqq., Panormi 1557; Ullathorne, *The Immaculate Conception* (revised ed. by Canon Iles), pp. 56 sqq., 151, London 1905.

54 "*. . . tum propter Christi praecipuum honorem, quem decebat de purissima matre fieri, tum propter Virginis praerogativam, quae debuit in dignitate sanctificationis ceteros sanctos et sanctas praeire.*" (St. Bonaventure, *Comment. in Quatuor Libros Sent.*, III, dist. 3, p. 1, art. 1, qu. 2.)

55 Cfr. Prov. XVII, 6.

diminishing, the Immaculate Conception enhances and shows forth His dignity and power.

A man may be redeemed in a twofold manner, either by being cleansed from sin or by being preserved from it altogether. The latter mode of redemption is undoubtedly the more perfect of the two, for, as Lorinus observes, "To prevent one from falling into something from which he would have to be rescued, is the nobler way of liberation."[56] To hold that Mary was exempt from original sin is not to deny that she was redeemed by Jesus Christ, but to assert that she was redeemed by Him in a most perfect manner, which greatly redounds to the glory of the Redeemer.

b) Our reason shrinks from the thought that she who was from all eternity predestined to be the living temple of the Logos, the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of the New Testament, should have been even temporarily tainted by original sin. St. Bonaventure holds that the dignity of divine motherhood raised Mary to a unique rank unattainable by any other creature. This being the case, logic demands that she should be absolutely pure and stainless. Had she ever, even for a single moment, been under the yoke that weighs so heavily on the "children of anger," she would not have been always and absolutely pure.

As Deipara Mary undoubtedly surpasses Eve and all the angels of Heaven in dignity. Now Eve and the angels were created in a state of original holiness, hence it would not be reasonable to suppose that Mary, whose dignity is so far superior to theirs, and who is rightly called the "Heavenly Eve" and "Queen of Angels," was created in the state of original sin.[57]

56 "*Nobilior liberandi modus est impedire, ne quis in id incidat, unde debeat liberari.*" (*Comment. in Ps.*, 85, 13.)

57 But it would be heretical to

St. John the Baptist was sanctified in his mother's womb because he was destined to be the precursor of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Mary must have been sanctified from the very beginning of her existence, for else she would be on a par with the precursor, which is repugnant.

The opponents of the dogma never denied that the Blessed Virgin, on account of her exalted dignity, was preserved from personal sin (*peccatum actuale*) and the effects of concupiscence (*concupiscentia*) all her life.[58] Now, according to St. Augustine, original sin is related to actual (or personal) sin as cause to effect. Actual or personal sin mostly originates in concupiscence, which in its turn is a penalty of original sin.[59] Hence the absence of one implies absence of the other. Mary never committed actual sin, consequently she must have been conceived without original sin.

Again, it is the teaching of the Fathers that Christ was exempt from original sin, not only because He was the Divine Logos, but also because of His virginal conception and birth.[60] "He alone was born without sin," says St. Austin, "whom His virgin mother conceived without the embrace of a husband, not by the concupiscence of the flesh, but by the submission of her mind." [61] It was meet that Christ should confer the immunity to which He was entitled as King, at least as a privilege upon His

hold, as Petrus Comestor (+ 1179) did, that Mary was in every way equal to our first parents before the fall and consequently stood in no need of redemption. This is a point of view which throws new light on the opposition of so many theologians to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception before its definition. Cfr. Commer's *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und spekulative Theologie*, 1905, pp. 483 sqq.

58 *V. infra*, Section 2.

59 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *God the Author of Nature and the Supernatural*, p. 289.

60 *Op. cit.*, pp. 281, 286.

61 "*Solus sine peccato natus est, quem sine virili complexu non concupiscentiâ carnis, sed obedientiâ mentis virgo concepit.*" (*De Pecc. Merit. et Rem.*, I, n. 57.)

Queen, according to the principle laid down by the Roman legist Ulpian, that "A king is not subject to the laws, and though his queen is subject to them, the king grants her the same privileges which he himself enjoys." [62] This explains the deeper meaning of the memorable words which King Assuerus spoke to Esther, who was a prototype of the Blessed Virgin Mary: "Fear not, Thou shalt not die; for this law is not made for thee, but for all others." [63]

5. The Teaching of St. Thomas.—Theologians are divided in their opinion as to what was the mind of St. Thomas in regard to the Immaculate Conception. Some [64] frankly admit that he opposed what in his day was not yet a defined dogma, but insist that he virtually admitted what he formally denied. Others [65] claim that the Angelic Doctor expressly defended the Immaculate Conception and that the (about fifteen) adverse passages quoted from his writings must be regarded as later interpolations. Between these extremes stand two other groups of theologians, one of which [66] holds that St. Thomas was undecided in his attitude towards the Immaculate Conception, while the other [67] merely maintains the impossibility of proving that he opposed the doctrine.

62 "*Princeps legibus subditus non est, augusta vero, licet sit subdita, princeps tamen eadem privilegia illi concedit, quae ipse habet.*"

63 Esth. XV, 12 sq. Cfr. Suarez, *De Myst. Vitae Christi*, disp. 3, sect. 5, where these considerations are developed at length.

64 Scheeben, Schwane, Chr. Pesch, Többe, Gutberlet.

65 Velasquez, Sfondrati, Frassen, Lambruschini, Palmieri.

66 To this group belong Malou, Tepe, and others.

67 Prominent in this group are Cornoldi, Morgott, Hurter, etc.

a) In order to arrive at a just and impartial idea of St. Thomas' position we shall have to study his teaching in connection with what may be called its theological environment. Influenced by the attitude of St. Bernard, who was otherwise an ardent devotee of the Blessed Virgin, all the predecessors and contemporaries of the Angelic Doctor — with the exception perhaps of his fellow Dominican Vincent of Beauvais (d. 1264) — opposed the Immaculate Conception. Of St. Anselm of Canterbury, the "Father of Scholasticism," it has been truly said that, like Aquinas, he virtually asserted the Immaculate Conception in his premises and denied it formally in his conclusions.[68] It is to Anselm that Scholasticism owes the oft-quoted Mariological principle: "It was meet that the Blessed Virgin should shine in a splendor of purity than which none greater can be conceived under God, that virgin to whom God the Father had determined to give His Son, whom He had begotten as His equal, and whom He loved like Himself,— and He gave Him in such wise that He would be the Son of both God the Father and the Virgin." [69]

Peter Lombard (d. 1164) taught that "the Blessed Virgin bore the taint of original sin, but was entirely cleansed before she conceived Christ." [70] This was the common teaching in the Franciscan Order. No wonder that the most eminent theologians of that Order, up to the time of Duns Scotus (d. 1308), battled side by side with the Dominicans.[71] Not to mention Alex-

68 Cfr. *Cur Deus Homo?* II, 16.

69 "*Decens erat, ut ea puritate, qua sub Deo maior nequit intelligi, virgo illa niteret, cui Deus Pater unicum Filium suum, quem de corde suo aequalem sibi genitum tamquam seipsum diligebat, ita dare disponebat, ut unus idemque communis Dei Patris et Virginis esset Filius.*" (*De Concept. Virg.*, c. 18.)

70 "*Beata Virgo habuit peccatum originale, sed ante conceptionem Christi perfecte purgata est.*" (*Liber Sent.*, III, dist. 3.)

71 Among them Albert the Great (1193–1280), who was the teacher of St. Thomas.

ander of Hales (d. 1245), St. Bonaventure, who was one of the greatest lights among the Minorites, while admitting that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception might be defended as probable on the strength of certain considerations of fitness,[72] openly espoused the opposite view.[73]

b) Placed in a theological environment in which the true solution of the problem was not yet attainable, St. Thomas, in common with the most eminent and saintly doctors of his time, had a perfect right to defend a thesis which was by no means regarded as scandalous but open to discussion. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was still in process of clarification.

The Angelic Doctor nowhere expressly teaches the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the sense in which it has since been defined as an article of faith. True, he says with St. Anselm: "Purity is constituted by a recession from impurity, and therefore it is possible to find some creature purer than all the rest, namely one not contaminated by any taint of sin; such was the purity of the Blessed Virgin, who was immune from original and actual sin, yet under God, inasmuch as there was in her the potentiality of sin."[74] But the "immunity from original sin" which St. Thomas ascribes to our

72 Cfr. his *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 9, memb. 2.

73 He writes: "*Quidam dicere voluerunt, in anima gloriosa virginis gratiam sanctificationis praevenisse maculam peccati originalis. . . . Aliorum vero positio est, quod sanctificatio virginis subsecuta est originalis peccati contractionem, et hoc quia nullus immunis fuit a culpa originalis peccati nisi solum Filius virginis: hic autem modus dicendi communior est et rationabilior et securior.*" (*Opera S. Bonavent.*, t. III, p. 69, scholion, Quaracchi edition, 1887.)

74 "*Puritas intenditur per recessum a contrario, et ideo potest aliquid creatum inveniri, quo nihil purius esse potest in rebus creatis, si nullâ contagione peccati inquinatum sit: et talis fuit puritas b. Virginis, quae a peccato originali et actuali immunis fuit, tamen sub Deo, inquantum erat in ea potentia ad peccandum.*" (*Comment. in Quatuor Libros Sent.*, I, dist. 44, qu. 1, art. 3).

Lady is not synonymous with "immaculate conception," as can be seen from the third part of the famous *Summa Theologica,* qu. 27, art. 2, ad 2. Consequently, it is not fair to charge the Angelic Doctor with inconsistency because in numerous other passages, where he treats the question *ex professo,* he denies the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. He did not hold that God could not create a perfectly spotless creature,—his objections are mainly based on the privileged character of the Redeemer and the absolute necessity of redemption for all human beings without exception. The following passage from the *Summa Theologica* shows that its author consistently adhered to his standpoint up to the time of his death. "If the soul of the Blessed Virgin had never been defiled by original sin, this would derogate from the dignity of Christ as the Redeemer of all mankind. It may be said, therefore, that under Christ, who as the universal Saviour needed not to be saved Himself, the Blessed Virgin enjoyed the highest measure of purity. For Christ in no wise contracted original sin, but was holy in His very conception . . . The Blessed Virgin, however, did contract original sin, but was cleansed therefrom before her birth."[75]

This is the uniform teaching of Aquinas in all his writings, *viz.:* that the birth of our Lady was holy and immaculate, but not her conception.[76]

75 "*Si nunquam anima b. Virginis fuisset contagio originalis peccati inquinata, hoc derogaret dignitati Christi, secundum quam est universalis omnium Salvator. Et ideo sub Christo, qui salvari non indiguit, tamquam universalis Salvator, maxima fuit b. Virginis puritas. Nam Christus nullo modo contraxit originale peccatum, sed in ipsa sui conceptione fuit sanctus. . . . Sed b. Virgo contraxit quidem originale peccatum, sed ab eo fuit mundata antequam ex utero nasceretur.*" (*Summa Theol.,* 3a, qu. 27, art. 2, ad 2).

76 Cfr. *Comp. Theol.,* c. 224. It is an error that the Domin-

Readings: — Besides the general works quoted on pp. 35 sqq., *supra*, the student will find it profitable to consult on the subject of the Immaculate Conception the following: Th. Stozzi, *Controversia dell' Immacolata Concezione*, 2 vols., Palermo 1700.— B. Plazza, *Causa Immaculatae Conceptionis*, Panormi 1557.— Lambruschini, *Sull' Immacolato Concepimento di Maria*, Rome 1843.— *Ant. Ballerini, *Sylloge Monumentorum ad Myst. Immaculatae Conceptionis Spectantium*, 2 vols., Rome 1854–6.— *Passaglia, *De Immaculato Conceptu B. Mariae Virginis*, 3 vols., Rome 1855.— *Malou, *De l'Immaculée Conception*, 2 vols., Bruxelles 1857.— Cornoldi, *Sententia S. Thomae de Immunitate B. Virginis Dei Parentis a Peccati Originalis Labe*, 2nd ed., Naples 1870.— A. Roskoványi, *De B. Virgine Maria in suo Conceptu Immaculata ex Monumentis Omnium Saeculorum Declarata*, 9 vols., Neutra 1873-81.—*Palmieri, *De Deo Creante et Elevante*, thes. 82 sqq., Rome 1878.— W. Többe, *Die Stellung des hl. Thomas von Aquin zu der unbefleckten Empfängnis*, Münster 1892.— C. M. Schneider, *Die unbefleckte Empfängnis und die Erbsünde*, Ratisbon 1892.— *Chr. Pesch, *Praelectiones Dogmaticae*, Vol. III, 3d ed., pp. 152 sqq., Freiburg 1908.— X. M. Le Bachelet, S. J., *L'Immaculée Conception*, Paris 1904.— L. Kösters, S. J., *Maria die unbefleckt Empfangene*, Ratisbon 1905.— J. B. Terrien, S. J., *L'Immaculée Conception*, Paris 1904.— P. Friedrich, *Die Mariologie des hl. Augustinus*, Freiburg 1907.— Archbishop Ullathorne, O. S. B., *The Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, Revised by Canon Iles*, Westminster 1904.— F. G. Holweck, *Fasti Mariani*, Freiburg 1892.— Idem, art. "Immaculate Conception" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VII.— E. Vacandard, *"Les Origines de la Fête et du Dogme de l'Immaculée Conception"* in the third volume of the *Etudes de Critique et de l'Histoire Religieuse*, Paris 1912.

ican Order has always, and in almost all its distinguished men, been opposed to the pure origin of the Blessed Virgin. See Archbishop Ullathorne, *The Immaculate Conception*, ed. Iles, pp. 144 sqq. A number of Dominican theologians who wrote in favor of the Immaculate Conception are quoted by Rouard de Gard, *L'Ordre des Frères-Prêcheurs et l'Immaculée Conception*, Bruxelles 1864. Cfr. also Chr. Pesch, *Prael. Dogmat.*, Vol. III, 3rd ed., pp. 170 sqq., Freiburg 1908; Heinrich-Gutberlet, *Dogmatische Theologie*, Vol. VII, pp. 436 sqq., Mainz 1896; W. Többe, *Die Stellung des hl. Thomas zu der unbefleckten Empfängnis*, Münster 1892; L. Janssens, *De Deo-Homine*, Vol. II, pp. 130 sqq., Freiburg 1902.

SECTION 2

MARY'S SINLESSNESS

The Blessed Virgin Mary was free from concupiscence, which is the source of personal or actual sin. It follows that she was absolutely sinless, and, in a sense, impeccable. We shall make our meaning clear in three theses.

Thesis I: The Blessed Virgin Mary was throughout her life actually exempt from every impulse of concupiscence.

This proposition is theologically certain.

Proof. The term concupiscence may signify either a habit (*habitus concupiscentiae, fomes peccati*), or the exercise of that habit (*actus concupiscentiae, motus inordinati*).[1]

As a habit, concupiscence does not involve a state of enmity with God. So long as the will withholds its free consent, the first inordinate stirrings (*actus primo-primi*) of concupiscence are not formally sinful and, therefore, do not *per se* involve a moral defect. Objectively and materially, however, they run counter to the moral law, and the only reason why they are not sinful is the absence of free consent, which is a subjective con-

[1] Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *God the Author of Nature and the Supernatural*, pp. 200 sqq.

dition of sin. For this reason St. Paul calls concupiscence sin, and the Council of Trent explains that it "originates in and leads to sin."[2] In this sense concupiscence, both as a habit and as an act, involves a moral taint, especially if the habit be conceived as seeking vent in inordinate movements.

Revelation does not tell us whether or not concupiscence existed *as a habit* in the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary. If it did, it never manifested itself in objectively sinful motions, because Our Lady, for the sake of her Divine Son, was preserved absolutely pure and immaculate. This is Catholic teaching which has at all times been so generally acknowledged that the opponents of the Immaculate Conception never ventured to attack it.

a) The Protevangelium[3] and the Angelic Salutation[4] furnish no stringent proof for our thesis, because concupiscence does not necessarily entail enmity with God. The argument rests mainly on Christian Tradition, which, since about the fifth century, so consistently developed the idea of Mary's absolute sinlessness that it became an axiom with the Scholastics that "the Mother of God must have been endowed with a purity inferior only to that of God Himself and His Christ."[5] Now, though concupiscence is called sin only in a figurative sense, its indeliberate stirrings, as we have said, involve a moral taint, which cannot be harmonized with the notion of ab-

2 ". . . *quia ex peccato est et ad peccatum inclinat.*" (Sess. V, can. 5; Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 792.)

3 Gen. III, 15.

4 Luke I, 28.

5 "*Mater Dei eâ puritate nitere debuit, quâ sub Deo vel Christo maior nequit intelligi.*"

solute purity. Consequently, the Blessed Virgin Mary, as the pure Mother of God, must have been entirely exempt from concupiscence.

a) Some of the traditional witnesses give explicit utterance to this conclusion. Thus Hesychius of Jerusalem refers to our Lady as "she whom the odor of concupiscence hath not touched, nor the worm of pleasure harmed." [6] St. John of Damascus greets her as a "holy book, imperviable to evil thoughts." [7] Other Patristic writers exalt her purity above that of the angels, and thus virtually declare her immune both from original sin and concupiscence. Thus we read in the works of St. Ephrem Syrus: "Mother of God . . . all-pure, all-immaculate, all-stainless, all-undefiled, all-blameless, all-worthy of praise, all-incorrupt; . . . after the Trinity, mistress of all; after the Paraclete, another consoler; and after the Mediator, the whole world's mediatrix; higher beyond compare than Cherubim and Seraphim, . . . fulness of the graces of the Trinity, holding the second place after the Godhead." [8]

β) The theological argument rests partly on the dogma of the Immaculate Conception,[9] and partly on that of our Lady's perpetual virginity.[10]

6 *Hom. in Deipar.*, I (Migne, *P. G.*, XCIII, 1466).

7 *Orat. in Deip. Nativ.*, 2, n. 7.

8 *Opera Gr. Lat.*, III, 528: "*Tota casta, tota immaculata, tota illibata, tota intemerata, tota incontaminata, tota celebranda, tota incorrupta. . . . Post SS. Trinitatem omnium Domina, post Paracletum altera consolatrix, et post Mediatorem mediatrix totius mundi, sine comparatione superior et gloriosior Cherubim et Seraphim. . . . Plenitudo gratiarum Trinitatis, secundas post divinitatem partes ferens.*" For a more detailed statement of the Patristic argument in favor of our thesis consult Palmieri, *De Deo Creante et Elevante*, thes. 90, Rome 1878.

9 *Supra*, Section 1.

10 *Infra*, Section 3.

Neither of these prerogatives could coexist with concupiscence, which is an effect and a remnant of original sin and utterly repugnant to the high ideal of virginity which the Christian Church has always admired in our Lady.[11]

But if she was exempt from concupiscence, how could she perform meritorious acts? The answer is easy: by the conscientious practice of humility, obedience, mortification, and other virtues.

b) Theologians at one time disputed the question whether concupiscence (*fomes peccati*) was merely checked (*ligatus*) or entirely extinct (*extinctus*) in the Blessed Virgin. Now that her Immaculate Conception is an article of faith, this question can be decided by simply saying that concupiscence did not exist at all in our Blessed Mother. Being a penalty of sin,[12] concupiscence cannot have dwelled in a soul which was never even for an instant defiled by iniquity.

Following the lead of St. Thomas, most older theologians divide the earthly life of our Lady into two periods and hold that during the first period concupiscence lay dormant in her soul,[13] while during the second, it was totally extinct.[14] This distinction can be defended only

11 *Virgo purissima, perfectissima, unica.*

12 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *God the Author of Nature and the Supernatural*, p. 289.

13 They call this state *ligatio, consopitio.*

14 *Extinctio, sublatio.* Cfr. *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 27, art. 3: "*Melius videtur dicendum, quod per sanctificationem in utero non fuerit sublatus b. Virgini fomes secundum essentiam, sed remanserit ligatus. . . . Postmodum vero in ipsa conceptione carnis Christi, in qua primo debuit refulgere peccati immunitas, credendum est quod ex prole redundaverit in matrem, totaliter fomite sublato.*"

on the assumption that our Lady's so-called first sanctification consisted in her being cleansed from original sin in her mother's womb, rather than in her being entirely preserved from it. The definition of the dogma constrains us to believe, both on theological and philosophical grounds, that the habit of concupiscence was radically destroyed in the soul of our Lady by virtue of her Immaculate Conception. This is really the only consistent view to take. It was espoused by some of the earliest defenders of the dogma, *e. g.*, Duns Scotus and Gabriel Biel. The objection that so sublime a prerogative would exalt the Mother at the expense of her Divine Son, was refuted by Suarez, who showed that, rightly understood, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception tends rather to enhance than to diminish the glory of Christ.[15]

The foregoing considerations enable us to form a solid opinion with regard to the question whether or not the sinlessness of the Blessed Virgin may be described as a state of original justice analogous to that of our first parents in Paradise. The answer depends on how we define the term *iustitia originalis*. If we take it to mean the totality of those supernatural and preternatural prerogatives which our first parents enjoyed in the Garden, then Mary was not conceived and born in the state of original justice, because, unlike Adam and Eve, she was subject to death and suffering and in need of being redeemed. But if we define *iustitia originalis* as perfect sanctity and sinlessness, we can and must say that the state of original justice was more fully realized in Mary than in Adam and Eve.

15 Suarez, *De Myst. Vitae Christi*, disp. 4, sect. 5, n. 11.

Thesis II: The Blessed Virgin Mary was by a special divine privilege actually exempt from personal sin.

This thesis embodies an article of faith.

Proof. The Council of Trent declares: "If any one assert that man, after he is once justified, is able to avoid throughout his lifetime all, even venial sin, except by a special divine privilege, as the Church holds in regard to the Blessed Virgin, let him be anathema." [16]

Hence it is an article of faith that Mary, in contradistinction to all other human beings, was by a special privilege preserved from venial as well as mortal sin throughout her lifetime.

It should, however, be noted that this dogma merely asserts the fact of Mary's sinlessness, but does not say that it is based on impeccability.[17]

a) That the Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from sin may be inferred (1) from the Scriptural and Patristic teaching that she enjoyed the fulness of grace,[18] and (2) from the fact that her purity surpassed that of the angels. The argument is strengthened by a consideration of her intimate union with Christ, the "second Adam," and her own antithetical relation to the "first Eve."

16 Sess. VI, can. 23: "*Si quis hominem semel iustificatum dixerit. . . . posse in tota vita peccata omnia, etiam venialia vitare, nisi ex speciali Dei privilegio, quemadmodum de b. Virgine tenet Ecclesia, anathema* sit." (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 833.)

17 Cfr. Thesis III, *infra.*

18 *V. supra,* pp. 24 sqq.

Mary was incapable of committing mortal sin for the reason that God had put absolute and permanent enmity between her and the devil, which fact is incompatible with original, and *a fortiori* with mortal, sin.[19] She could not even commit venial sin; for though venial sin does not destroy the bond of friendship with God, it involves a positive moral defect which we can not attribute to the Blessed Virgin Mary without running counter to the traditional conception of her absolute sinlessness.[20] If Mary were not absolutely stainless, the Church could not exhort us to address her in the terms of the Canticle of Canticles: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee." [21]

b) As regards Tradition, the dogma of the sinlessness of the Blessed Virgin, unlike that of her Immaculate Conception, did not undergo a process of clarification, but existed from the beginning in the fully developed form in which it has come down to us. "We must except the Holy Virgin Mary," says St. Augustine, "concerning whom I wish to raise no question, when it touches the subject of sin, out of honor to the Lord." [22] In other words, the Blessed Virgin Mary was without sin because the honor of her Divine Son demanded it.

This quotation from St. Augustine fairly represents the belief of Western Christendom. Strange to say, the

19 *V. supra,* pp. 43 sqq.

20 Cfr. Al. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift,* p. 116. (Engl. tr., pp. 123 sqq.)

21 Canticle of Canticles IV, 7.

22 "*Exceptâ itaque S. Virgine Mariâ, de qua propter honorem Domini nullam prorsus, quum de peccato agitur, haberi volo quaestionem.*" (*De Nat. et Grat.*, c. 36, n. 42.)

dogma of the personal sinlessness of our Lady suffered temporary obscuration in the East, where the Immaculate Conception was so tenaciously professed. St. Chrysostom holds that the petition which Mary addressed to her Son at the marriage feast of Cana was prompted by feminine vanity and her desire to speak to Jesus when He was preaching to the multitudes,[23] by imperiousness.[24] St. Basil[25] and St. Cyril of Alexandria[26] interpret the prophecy of Simeon as implying that a doubt in the Divinity of Jesus would enter the heart of Mary under the Cross. Petavius boldly censures these opinions as "preposterous."[27] However, the fact that they were held by such eminent authorities proves that during the first four centuries the dogma of the personal sinlessness of our Lady was not so generally believed in the East as in the West, where SS. Ambrose and Augustine proclaimed and defended it. The attitude of the Greek Fathers may perhaps be explained by the fact that they were imbued with the Oriental notion that woman is inferior to man and subject to certain frailties and defects which are not strictly speaking faults. In judging their attitude, therefore, it will be well to distinguish between an accidental popular notion and the tradition of the faith. The Madgeburg Centuriators were certainly not justified in appealing to the Fathers in their endeavor to represent Mary as a sinful woman, for St. Andrew of Crete and St. John of Damascus, and long before either St. Ephrem Syrus, faithfully voiced the true ecclesiastical belief.[28]

23 Matth. XII, 46 sqq.

24 Chrys., *Hom. in Ioa.*, 21 (*al.* 22); *Hom. in Matth.*, 44, n. 1.

25 *Ep. 259 ad Optim.*

26 *In Ioa.*, 19, 25.

27 "*Haec trium summorum virorum praepostera sunt iudicia de Dei matre ss. Virgine, quae nemo prudens laudare possit.*" (*De Incarn.*, XIV, 1.)

28 Cfr. H. Hurter, *Comp. Theol. Dogm.*, Vol. II, thes. 164; St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 27, art. 4.

Thesis III: The proximate cause of our Lady's sinlessness was a kind of impeccability; its remote and ultimate cause was the grace of Divine Motherhood.

We are now dealing with a merely probable theological opinion.

Proof. Sinlessness (*impeccantia*) is actual freedom from sin; impeccability (*impeccabilitas*), absolute inability to sin. The former does not necessarily imply the latter, because God could preserve a human being from sin by simply withholding his physical concurrence. In the case of our Lady, however, we are justified in assuming that her purity was due to a kind of intrinsic impeccability.

Impeccability may be either metaphysical or moral. Metaphysical impeccability belongs exclusively to God, whereas moral impeccability may also be enjoyed by creatures. It is enjoyed, *e. g.*, by the angels and saints in Heaven. God is impeccable because He is absolutely and infinitely holy;[29] Christ, in consequence of the Hypostatic Union;[30] the angels and saints, by virtue of the beatific vision of the Godhead which they enjoy.[31] How are we to conceive the impeccability of the Blessed Virgin Mary? It is quite obvious that her impeccability must differ specifically from that proper to God and the God-man Jesus Christ. Hers is not a divine attribute, nor is it conditioned by or based upon a personal union of divinity

29 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *God: His Knowability, Essence, and Attributes*, pp. 251 sqq., St. Louis 1911.

30 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, pp. 207 sqq., St. Louis 1913.

31 This subject will be treated in Eschatology.

with humanity. It cannot be a result of the beatific vision, because Mary during her sojourn on earth was a wayfarer like ourselves and did not enjoy beatitude.[32] Comparing her impeccability to that of the angels and saints and to that of our first parents in Paradise, we may define it as an intermediate state between the two. It would be asserting too much to say that the Blessed Virgin was capable of committing sin like our first parents; and too little to assert that during her life-time she was incapable of sinning as the angels and saints of Heaven are now, in consequence of the beatific vision. In what, then, did her impeccability consist? We are probably not far from the truth when we assume that God gave her the gift of perfect perseverance[33] as against mortal sin, and that of confirmation in grace[34] as against venial sin. Together with her freedom from concupiscence these two graces may be regarded as the proximate cause of Mary's impeccability. For its ultimate cause we must go back to the higher and more comprehensive prerogative of her divine motherhood.[35] God owed it to His own dignity and holiness, so to speak, to bestow the grace of perfect perseverance and confirmation in grace upon her from whom His Divine Son was to assume human nature. This idea is aptly illustrated by "the woman clothed with the sun" whom St. John visioned in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse. The analogy between Mary's impeccability and that of her Divine Son would seem to render this theory all the more acceptable, though we must, of course, never forget that the impeccability of Christ is based upon the Hypostatic

32 *V. supra*, p. 31.

33 *Donum perfectae perseverantiae.*

34 *Donum confirmationis in gratia.* Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, pp. 221 sq.

35 *Gratia maternitatis divinae.* V. *supra*, pp. 4 sqq.

Union of Godhead and manhood, whereas that of His Mother rests merely upon the grace of divine motherhood.[36]

READINGS: — *St. Thomas, *S. Theol.*, 3a, qu. 27, art. 4, and the commentators.— *Suarez, *De Myst. Vitae Christi,* disp. 4, sect. 3–6.— Vasquez, *Comment. in S. Th.*, disp. 118.— Petavius, *De Incarnatione,* XIV, 1 sqq.— Albertus Magnus, *Mariale,* qu. 133 sqq., Lugduni 1651.— Christopher Vega, *Theologia Mariana,* palaestr. VII, cert. 4; IX, 1, Lugduni 1653.— *Scheeben, *Dogmatik,* Vol. III, § 280, Freiburg 1882.— Tepe, *Institutiones Theologicae,* Vol. III, pp. 708 sqq., Paris 1896.— J. Bucceroni, *Commentarii de SS. Corde Iesu, de B. Virgine Maria et de S. Iosepho,* ed. 4, pp. 81 sqq., Rome 1896.

36 Cfr. Scheeben, *Dogmatik,* Vol. III, § 280.

SECTION 3

MARY'S PERPETUAL VIRGINITY

The most beautiful jewel in the crown of Our Lady, aside from her immaculate conception, is her perpetual virginity.

Virginity, in the sense of internal purity, is included in the concept of sinlessness, with which we have dealt in the preceding Section. Here we are concerned only with external or bodily virginity (*virginitas carnis*), and, employing the term in this meaning, we affirm that Mary was an inviolate virgin before, during, and after the birth of her Divine Son.

Thesis I: Mary was a pure virgin before the birth of Christ.

This thesis embodies an article of faith.

Proof. The period here under consideration comprises the whole previous life of Our Lady up to the Annunciation, and particularly the moment when she conceived her Divine Son. The dogma embodied in our thesis was impugned by the ancient sects of the Ebionites and Cerinthians, by the Jews,[1] the Socinians, and many

[1] Cfr. the *Sanhedrin* and the *Toledoth Jeschuah.*

modern Rationalists, *e. g.*, Wegscheider, De Wette, Strauss, Renan, Paulus, Venturini, etc. It is contained in the so-called Apostles' Creed: "[Jesus Christ] was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," [2] and has been echoed by many councils.[3]

a) That Mary was a virgin up to the time when the Angel announced to her the mystery of the Incarnation, is plain from Luke I, 26 sq.: ". . . the Angel Gabriel was sent from God . . . to a virgin [4] espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary." Her virginity was not violated when she conceived our Lord Jesus Christ. Luke I, 35: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee." Cfr. Matth. I, 18: "As his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together [5] she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost." [6] Conceived of the Holy Ghost, without the coöperation of a human male, Christ was not the son of Joseph, but merely supposed to be such.[7] In explanation of the unique miracle of the virgin birth, St. Matthew [8] refers to a famous Old Testament prophecy: [9] "Now all this

2 "*Conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria Virgine.*"

3 Cfr. Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 144, 256, etc.

4 *Virgo*, παρθένος.

5 πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτούς.

6 εὑρέθη ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου.

7 Luke III, 23.

8 Matth. I, 22 sq.

9 Is. VII, 14: "*Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium et vocabitur nomen eius Emmanuel.*"

was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

Christian Tradition has always taken this passage to refer to the conception and birth of the Messias, because to none other can the name Emmanuel be fitly applied. We know as the result of a complete induction [10] that the Hebrew word עַלְמָה hardly ever means simply "girl" (*puella*, νεᾶνις), but almost without exception "virgin," in the proper sense of that term (*virgo*, παρθένος).[11] The phrase "a virgin shall be with child" must therefore be taken in *sensu composito*, that is, as denoting virginal conception without male coöperation. There would be nothing extraordinary in the prophecy of Isaias if it were interpreted in *sensu diviso, i. e.*, as meaning that the virgin who was to be with child was to be a virgin only till the time of her conception, but not thereafter.[12]

b) The Fathers are unanimous in teaching that Christ was conceived by a virgin and that the prophecy of Isaias applies to Him.

St. Justin Martyr, for example, says: "The words 'Behold, a virgin shall be with child' mean that the vir-

10 Gen. XXIV, 43; Ex. II, 8; Ps. LXVIII, 26; Cant. I, 3; VI, 8; Prov. XXX, 18 sq.

11 St. Irenæus was probably the first to call attention to this distinction. (*Adv. Haer.*, III, 21; cfr. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, V, 8).

12 For a detailed exegetical explanation of Is. VII, 14 consult Al. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift*, pp. 22 sqq. (Engl. tr., pp. 28 sqq.); Knabenbauer, *Comment. in Is.*, VII, 14, Paris 1887; Maas, *Christ in Type and Prophecy*, Vol. I, pp. 351 sqq., New York 1893.

gin shall conceive without fleshly commerce. For had she admitted such commerce, she would no longer be a virgin. But the power of God effected that she conceived as a virgin." [13]

An ancient image of our Lady in the catacombs (perhaps the oldest that has come down to us from early Christian times) [14] shows the prophet Isaias clothed in a pallium, wearing sandals on his feet, and pointing with his right hand to a scroll in his left. At his right is a picture of the Madonna, in sitting posture, with stole and a short veil, holding the infant Jesus in her arms. The whole group is surmounted by an eight-cornered star.[15]

Several of the Fathers illustrate the miraculous conception of our Lord by saying that Mary conceived Him through "faith." "It behooved a virgin to bring forth Him who was conceived by His mother's faith, not by her lust," says St. Augustine.[16] Other Patristic writers develop the beautiful thought that the virginity of Mary, far from being violated, was sealed and consecrated by the conception of her Divine Son. The reasons which St. Thomas [17] gives why it was fit that Christ should be conceived by a virgin, may, at least in part, be traced to the writings of the Fathers. They are the following: (1) It was meet that the Heavenly Father should be the sole progenitor of His Divine Son; (2) It was in accord with the purity of Christ's eternal γέννησις in the bosom of the Father that His temporal generation also should be absolutely chaste and holy; (3) It behooved

13 *Apol.*, I.

14 This image was discovered in the Roman catacomb of St. Priscilla, A. D. 1851, and probably dates back to the end of the first or the beginning of the second century.

15 Cfr. C. M. Kaufmann, *Handbuch der christlichen Archäologie*, p. 362, Paderborn 1905; Scaglia-Nagengast, *The Catacombs of Saint Callistus*, p. 67, Rome 1911.

16 *Enchiridion*, n. 34: *"De virgine nasci oportebat, quem fides matris, non libido conceperat."*

17 *Summa Theologica*, 3a, qu. 28, art. 1.

the sacred humanity of our Lord to be exempt from the taint of original sin; and (4) The virginal conception of Christ was highly appropriate in view of the chief purpose of the Incarnation, which was the regeneration of the human race "not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." [18]

c) From the theological point of view we may adduce the subjoined considerations.

Though the Blessed Virgin conceived her Divine Son without detriment to her virginity, she was the true spouse of St. Joseph.

St. Matthew [19] tells us that Joseph was not merely the fiancé, but the husband of Our Lady. "Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary,[20] of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Mark well, the Evangelist does not say: "Joseph begot Jesus." [21] Though his marriage with the Blessed Virgin was never consummated, St. Joseph was truly "the husband of Mary," and consequently the adoptive and legal father of Jesus. As such he enjoyed all the rights and prerogatives of a true father, *e. g.*, that of naming the child. Cfr. Matth. I, 20, sq.: "Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife,[22] for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost; and she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." [23] This text furnishes a key which unlocks for us the deeper meaning

18 Cfr. John I, 13.
19 Matth. I, 16.
20 *Virum Mariae*, τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας.
21 *V. supra*, p. 6.
22 *Coniugem tuam*, τὴν γυναῖκά σου.
23 Cfr. Matth. I, 25; II, 13, 20 sqq.

of such passages as Luke II, 33: "His father [24] and mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning him;" and Luke II, 48: "His mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, thy father [25] and I have sought thee sorrowing." St. Augustine lays special emphasis on this point. "Joseph," he says, "is said to be the father of Christ in the same way in which he is understood to be the husband of Mary, without carnal intercourse, by the connexion of marriage, that is to say, far more intimately than if he had been adopted in some other way." [26]

In 1892 Mrs. Agnes Smith Lewis and her twin sister Mrs. Margaret Dunlop Gibson discovered in the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai a palimpsest manuscript of the fourth or fifth century which lacks only about eight pages of the four Gospels. Professor Gregory [27] believes it to be "essentially the earliest Syriac text." This text renders Matth. I, 16, thus: "Joseph, to whom was espoused Mary the virgin, begot Jesus, who is called the Messias." Of course we do not know whether the Syriac translator rendered his Hebrew or Greek original faithfully; but even if he did, the passage need not necessarily be explained as contradicting the virginal conception of Our Lord. The term "begot" may be taken in a wider sense as supplying the basis for a legal paternity.[28]

24 *Pater eius.*

25 *Pater tuus.*

26 *De Consensu Evangel.*, II, 1: "*Eo modo pater Christi dicitur Ioseph, quo et vir Mariae intelligitur sine commixtione carnis, ipsa copulatione coniugii, multo videlicet coniunctius quam si esset aliunde adoptatus.*"

27 C. R. Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament*, p. 398, New York 1907; cfr. Holzhey, *Der neuentdeckte Syrus Sinaiticus*, München 1896. Holzhey's work contains a thorough examination of the Lewis codex, as well as a comparison of it with Cureton's text.

28 Cfr. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift*, p. 21, note 3, (Engl. tr., p. 27, n. 6); M. Seisen-

That the Holy Ghost is no more the natural father of Jesus than is St. Joseph, was expressly defined by the Eleventh Council of Toledo (A. D. 675).[29] The intrinsic metaphysical reason is this: divine generation can manifest itself outwardly only as *generatio aequivoca* (as, for instance, in the process of supernatural regeneration), whereas every true generation is a *generatio univoca*, aiming at the production of a being consubstantial with its progenitor. Such is, *e. g.*, the eternal generation of the Son by the Father; such, too, is all organic generation on earth. The part which the Third Person took in the conception of our Divine Saviour was of the nature of a divine appropriation and consisted in supernaturally supplying the missing male principle and furnishing the impetus necessary for the development of the embryo conceived in the virgin's womb.[30]

The great dignity of St. Joseph, which renders him particularly worthy of our veneration, is based on the unique privilege which he enjoyed, of being both the legal father of our Lord and the true husband of His Blessed Mother. Needless to say, he was a just and holy man.[31] Very properly do the faithful link his name with the sacred names of Jesus and Mary, and place themselves

berger, *Practical Handbook for the Study of the Bible*, tr. by A. M. Buchanan, pp. 245 sq., New York 1911.

29 "*Novâ autem nativitate est genitus, quia intacta virginitas et virilem coitum nescivit et foecundata per Spiritum Sanctum carnis materiam ministravit. . . . Nec tamen Spiritus Sanctus pater esse credendus est Filii, pro eo quod Maria eodem Sancto Spiritu obumbrante concepit, ne duos patres Filii videamur asserere, quod utique nefas est dici.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 282.)

30 Cfr. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 32, art. 3, ad. 1: "*Christus conceptus est de Maria Virgine materiam ministrante in similitudinem speciei, et ideo dicitur Filius eius. Christus autem secundum quod homo conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto sicut de activo principio, non tamen secundum similitudinem speciei, sicut homo nascitur de patre suo, et ideo Christus non dicitur filius Spiritus Sancti.*"

31 δίκαιος ὤν. Matth. I, 19.

under the special protection of the Holy Family, which presents such a perfect model of all virtues. One hundred and fifty-three of the Fathers assembled for the Vatican Council petitioned the Holy See to declare St. Joseph patron of the Universal Church.[32] This wish was gratified by Pius IX,[33] and the patronage of St. Joseph was reaffirmed and his cult recommended by Leo XIII.[34]

Thesis II: The Blessed Virgin Mary remained an inviolate virgin during parturition.

This is likewise an article of faith.

Proof. The virginal conception of Our Lord offers less difficulty to the human mind than His virgin birth, for the reason that maternity necessarily presupposes parturition. It is owing to this difficulty that Mary's *virginitas in partu* has become a dogma logically distinct from her *virginitas in conceptione.* Its chief opponent in ancient times was the infamous Jovinian, a heretic of the fourth century.[35] The fourteenth-

32 Cfr. C. Martin, *Conc. Vat. Docum. Collectio,* p. 214, Paderborn 1873.

33 Decree of Dec. 8, 1870.

34 Encyclical Letter "*Quamquam pluries,*" of August 15, 1889. On the dogmatic aspects of the part taken by St. Joseph in the economy of the Redemption cfr. Jamar, *Theologia S. Iosephi,* Louvain 1898. On the historic development of the devotion to the foster-father of our Lord, see J. Seitz, *Die Verehrung des hl. Joseph in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung bis zum Konzil von Trient,* Freiburg 1908; Kellner, *Heortology,* pp. 272 sqq., London 1908; Ricard, *S. Joseph, sa Vie et son Culte,* Lille 1896; C. L. Souvay, art. "Joseph, Saint" in the *Catholic Encyclopedia,* Vol. VIII. On the history of the dogma of Christ's virgin birth cfr. Durand-Bruneau, *The Childhood of Jesus Christ according to the Canonical Gospels,* pp. 45 sqq., Philadelphia 1910.

35 Our information about Jovinian is principally derived from St. Jerome's two books, *Adversus Jovinianum.* Cfr. Haller, *Jovinianus, die Fragmente seiner Schriften, die Quellen zu seiner Geschichte, sein Leben und seine Lehre,* Leipzig 1897.

century Lollards likewise held that the Blessed Virgin gave birth to her Son just as any ordinary mother. Modern Rationalists and infidel Bible critics quite naturally have nothing but scorn for the dogma of the virgin birth. Jovinian was condemned as a heretic by Pope Siricius at a council held in Rome, A. D. 390. The bishops of Italy and Gaul convoked in Milan by St. Ambrose solemnly declared: "Perversely they assert that she [Mary] conceived as a virgin but was no longer a virgin when she brought forth [her Son] . . . But if men will not believe the teaching of the priests, let them believe the pronouncements of Christ, let them believe the Apostles' Creed ['He was born of the Virgin Mary'], which the Church has always guarded and continues to preserve." [36]

a) The Gospel narrative of the birth of our Divine Saviour contains nothing either to prove or to disprove His virgin birth.[37] However, the dogma has sufficient Scriptural warrant in the prophecy of Isaias. In the sentence: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son," [38] the consequent ("a virgin will bear a son"), like the antecedent ("a virgin will conceive"), must mani-

36 "*De via perversitatis produntur dicere: Virgo concepit, sed non virgo generavit. . . . Sed si doctrinis non creditur sacerdotum, credatur oraculis Christi, credatur symbolo apostolico* [*scil. natus de Maria virgine*], *quod ecclesia Romana intemeratum semper custodivit et servat.*"

37 Cfr. Luke II, 5 sqq.

38 Is. VII, 14: "*Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet Filium.*"

festly be taken in *sensu composito*.[39] In other words, "a virgin will bear a son" means that she will remain a virgin though bearing a son.[40] A passage in Ezechiel is interpreted as referring typically to the virgin birth. "And the Lord said to me: This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it: because the Lord God of Israel hath entered in by it. . . ." [41]

An apparent difficulty arises from the Scriptural account of the Presentation. Luke II, 22 sq.: "After the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord." [42] The sacred writer here seems to put Mary on a level with ordinary mothers. But in matter of fact he merely cites a provision of the Mosaic law, to which the Mother of God conformed in all humility and obedience, despite the fact that the physiological suppositions did not exist in her case. We must remember that the law of Moses was made for the common run of humanity, not for the exceptional few. We must also note that the presentation of the Christ-child in the Tem-

39 See Thesis I, *supra*.

40 "*Mater inviolata*" (Litany of Loreto).

41 Ezech. XLIV, 2: "*Porta haec clausa erit, non aperietur et vir non transibit per eam, quoniam Dominus Deus Israel ingressus est per eam.*" On the traditional exegesis of this text cfr. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter*, pp. 56 sqq. (Engl. tr., pp. 63 sqq.)

42 "*Et postquam impleti sunt dies purgationis eius* (αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ) *secundum legem Moysi, tulerunt illum in Ierusalem, ut sisterent eum Domino, sicut scriptum est in lege Domini: Quia omne masculinum adaperiens vulvam* (διανοῖγον μήτραν) *sanctum Domino vocabitur.*"

ple is accounted for, not by the *apertio vulvae et purgatio sanguinis,* but by the Mosaic requirement that every first-born infant should be consecrated to the Lord. As Jesus was the first-born son of His virgin mother, He had to be presented in the Temple and consecrated to God according to the law.[43]

b) Tradition unmistakably attests Mary's *virginitas in partu,* in fact there is not a single Father who can be said to be uncertain in his attitude towards this question.

α) The nineteenth among the "Odes and Psalms of Solomon," lately rediscovered by Rendel Harris,[44] expresses belief in the virgin birth. As these Odes in their present form are probably the work of a Jewish-Christian who lived about A. D. 70, the passage to which we refer may be regarded as the most ancient extra-biblical testimony to the dogma of the *virginitas in partu.* It reads as follows: "The Virgin's body sprouted and she conceived and gave birth without pain to a Son; and by the fact that He became nought [humbled Himself] she received aplenty [became rich] and she asked not for a midwife; for He made her to live."[45] St. Ambrose declares: "The prophet Ezechiel[46] says that he saw the building of a city upon a very high mountain. The city had many gates. Of these one is described as shut. What is this gate but Mary? And shut because a virgin. Mary, then, is the gate through which Christ

43 Cfr. proposition number 24 among the *Propositiones damnatae ab Alexandro VIII, d. 7. Dec. 1690* (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1314): "*Oblatio in templo. . . . sufficienter testatur, quod indiguerit purificatione et quod Filius (qui offerebatur) etiam maculâ matris maculatus esset, secundum verba legis.*"

44 Published at Cambridge, 1909.

45 *Odes of Solomon,* verses 6–8.

46 Ezech. XLIV, 2.

came into this world, when he was shed forth by a virginal birth, without loosing the bars of virginity. The inclosure of purity remained unscathed, and the seals of integrity were kept inviolate, as He went forth from the virgin. . . . A good gate is Mary, that was closed, and was not opened. By her Christ passed, but He opened not." [47] St. Augustine thus descants on the miraculous character of this supernatural process: "The same power evolved the body of the infant from the virginal viscera of the inviolate mother, which afterwards conducted the body of the grown-up youth through locked doors. If we ask for the reason, it is not miraculous; if we demand an example, it is not singular. Let us grant that God can do something which we may as well admit we cannot fathom. In such matters the sole reason for a fact is the power of Him who causes it." [48] We will conclude the argument by a quotation from Pope Hormisdas (514–523): "The child by the power of God did not open his mother's womb nor destroy her virginity. It was in truth a mystery worthy of the God who was born, that He who wrought the conception without seed, preserved the birth from corruption." [49]

47 St. Ambrose, *De Instit. Virg.*, VIII, n. 52: ". . . *Quae est haec porta nisi Maria? Ideo clausa, quia virgo. Porta igitur Maria, per quam Christus intravit in hunc mundum, quando virginali fusus est partu et genitalia virginitatis claustra non solvit. Mansit intemeratum septum pudoris et inviolata integritatis duravere signacula. . . . Bona porta Maria, quae clausa erat et non aperiebatur, transivit per eam Christus, sed non aperuit.*"

48 *Ep.* 137 *ad Volus.*, II, 8: "*Ipsa virtus per inviolatae matris virginea viscera membra infantis eduxit, quae postea per clausa ostia membra iuvenis introduxit. Hic si ratio quaeritur, non erit mirabile; si exemplum poscitur, non erit singulare. Demus Deum aliquid posse, quod nos fateamur investigare non posse: in talibus rebus tota ratio facti est potentia facientis.*"

49 *Ep.* 79 *ad Iustin.*: "*Matris vulvam natus non aperiens et virginitatem matris deitatis virtute non solvens. Dignum plane Deo nascentis mysterium, ut servaret partum sine corruptione, qui conceptum fecit esse sine semine.*"

The Fathers employ a number of beautiful analogies to elucidate the dogma of the virgin birth. Thus they point to the spotless generation of the Logos in the bosom of the Father; to the genesis of thought in the spiritual soul; to the passage of light through a glass; to Christ's triumphant resurrection from a sealed tomb, His passing through locked doors, and so forth.

β) There are only two among the early Christian writers, Origen and Tertullian,[50] who can be accused of false teaching in regard to the virgin birth. They were misled by a mistaken regard for the motherhood of our Lady, and partly also by a misapprehension of Luke II, 22. A few ecclesiastical writers employ the expression "*vulva aperta*," but the context shows (especially when they argue against Docetism) that, far from denying the virginal character of Christ's birth, they merely mean to assert its reality.

c) It is a certain theological conclusion that the Blessed Virgin was spared the throes of child-birth.

St. Jerome quotes Sacred Scripture in support of this pious belief. "There was no obstetrician there," he says, "there were no sedulous women attendants. . . . She 'wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.'"[51] St. John of Damascus testifies to the belief of the Greeks that "no pleasure preceded this delivery, no birth-throes accompanied it."[52] St. Bernard

50 Tertullian says (*De Carne Christi*, c. 23): "*Et virgo quantum a viro, et non virgo quantum a partu. . . . Etsi virgo concepit, in partu suo nupsit ipsa, patefactâ corporis lege.*"

51 *Contra Helvid.*, c. 4: "*Nulla ibi obstetrix, nulla muliercularum sedulitas intercessit. . . . Pannis, inquit, involvit infantem et posuit in praesepio.*"

52 *De Fide Orth.*, IV, 15: ". . .

observes that Christ's conception "was without reproach and His birth without pain." [53]

Thesis III: The Blessed Mary remained a virgin after the birth of her Divine Son.

This thesis likewise embodies an article of faith.

Proof. Though married, our Lady preserved her virginity till death. The same is true of St. Joseph, who as St. Jerome remarks, "was Mary's protector rather than her husband, and like her, led a celibate life." [54]

This dogma was impugned in the early days by a sect called Antidicomarianites,[55] in the fourth and fifth centuries by Helvidius, Jovinian, and Bonosus, and in modern times by Th. Zahn [56] and other rationalist theologians. The Council of Capua (A. D. 389) denounced Bonosus as a heretic; his false teaching was censured at about the same time (A. D. 390) by synods held in Rome and Milan against Jovinian. The dogmatic term ever-virgin (ἀειπαρθένος, *semper virgo*), which had been coined early in the history of the Church, was incorporated in the Creed by the

quam nativitatem nulla voluptas anteivit nec dolor quidem in partu secutus est."

53 *Serm. de Virg. Nativitate*, 4: "*Conceptus fuit sine pudore, partus sine dolore."*— St. Thomas states the intrinsic reason of this phenomenon as follows: "*Christus egressus est ex clauso utero matris et sic nulla violentia apertionis meatuum ibi fuit, et propter hoc in illo partu nullus fuit dolor, sicut nec aliqua corruptio."* (*Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 35, art. 6.)

54 *Contra Helvid.*, 19: "*Mariae custos potius fuit quam maritus; relinquitur, virginem eum mansisse cum Maria."*

55 Gr. ἀντίδικοι Μαρίας.

56 *Brüder und Vettern Jesu*, Leipzig 1900.

Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople, A. D. 553.[57] The essential elements of the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity are severally emphasized by the Lateran Council of 649, which says: "If any one refuse to confess, in accordance with the holy Fathers, that Mary was properly speaking and of a truth the holy mother of God and always an immaculate virgin . . . that she conceived of the Holy Ghost without seed and gave birth without corruption, her virginity remaining inviolate also after parturition, let him be anathema." [58] The Sixth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (A. D. 680) expresses this truth more tersely as follows: "The virginity of Mary . . . remained before, during, and after parturition." [59]

a) Mary's *virginitas post partum* cannot be cogently proved from Sacred Scripture, but the dogma is deducible with moral certainty from the fact that she had resolved to remain a virgin all her life. It was this resolution which inspired her timid query: "How shall this be done, because I

57 "*. . . qui de coelis descendit et incarnatus de sancta gloriosa Dei genitrice et semper virgine Maria* (ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας ἐνδόξου θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας), *natus est ex ea.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 214.)

58 "*Si quis secundum sanctos patres non confitetur proprie et secundum veritatem Dei genitricem sanctam semperque virginem immaculatam Mariam. . . . absque semine concepisse ex Spiritu Sancto et incorruptibiliter eam genuisse indissolubili permanente et post partum eiusdem virginitate, condemnatus sit.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 256.)

59 "*Mariae illibata virginitas, quae ante partum, in partu et post partum est interminabilis.*"

know not man?"[60] Only after the Angel had assured her that her chastity would remain intact, did she consent to become the mother of Jesus: "Be it done to me according to thy word."[61]

a) Some of the Fathers (SS. Gregory of Nyssa,[62] Ambrose,[63] and Augustine[64]) held that Mary was bound by a vow of perpetual virginity. Suarez does not hesitate to call this "the Catholic view."[65] It is confirmed by the fact that Jesus, when dying on the Cross, entrusted His mother to the care of St. John.[66] "The words 'Behold thy son,'" says the Protestant exegete Hengstenberg, "indicate that Mary had no other sons besides Jesus. To honor one's parents by faithfully providing for them is not only the duty but the right of every child, and Jesus would have violated the rights of His brethren, had he had any, by entrusting His mother to John."[67]

β) All Antidicomarianite heretics since Bonosus have appealed to those well-known passages of the New Testament in which mention is made of the "brethren" of Jesus.[68] It is to be noted, however, that these "brethren" are nowhere referred to as sons of Mary. Jesus alone is called the son of Mary.[69] So long as the Rationalists do not bring proof to show that "brethren of Jesus" is synonymous with "sons of Mary," their assertion is gratuitous.

60 Luke I, 34.

61 Luke I, 38.

62 *In Nat. Domini* (Migne, *P. G.*, XLVI, 311).

63 *De Instit. Virg.*, V, 35.

64 *De Sanct. Virginit.*, n. 4.

65 *De Myst. Vitae Christi*, disp. 6, sect. 2. Cfr. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 28, art. 4.

66 Cfr. John XIX, 26 sqq.

67 *Das Evangelium des hl. Johannes*, Vol. III, p. 267, Leipzig 1863.

68 Cfr. Matth. XII, 46; XIII, 55; Mark III, 31 sq.; VI, 3; Luke VIII, 20; John II, 12; VII, 3 sqq.; Acts I, 14; Gal. I, 19.

69 *ὁ υἱὸς Μαρίας*. Cfr. Mark VI, 3.

But what does the Gospel mean when it speaks of the "brethren of Jesus"? Were they perhaps sons of St. Joseph by a previous marriage? This explanation was suggested by St. Epiphanius,[70] but has been generally rejected since the time of St. Jerome, (1) because it is based on apocryphal sources and (2) because the universal belief of Christians is and has always been that St. Joseph, like his holy spouse, abstained from carnal intercourse throughout his life.[71] A simpler explanation, now generally accepted is, that since the term "brother"[72] is used in both Testaments as a synonym for "kinsman" (nephew, cousin, etc.),[73] the so-called "brethren of Jesus" were probably near relatives of His Blessed Mother. We know this for certain in the case of three among the four who are enumerated by name as His brethren. St. Matthew records the query: "Is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Jude?"[74] And, indeed, there appears under the Cross, as the "mother of Jacob and Joseph," a certain Mary[75] who, according to St. John, was identical with the wife of Cleophas and is expressly designated as a "sister" (which probably means "cousin") of the Blessed Virgin.[76] Hence St. James the Less, who is emphatically called "the brother of the Lord,"[77] was a son

70 "*Ceterum Iosephus primam e tribu Iudae coniugem habuit, ex qua sex liberos suscepit, mares quatuor, feminas duas.*" (*Haer.*, 78, 7.)

71 Cfr. St. Jerome, *Contr. Helvid.*, c. 9: "*Tu dicis Mariam virginem non permansisse; ego mihi plus vindico, etiam ipsum Ioseph virginem fuisse per Mariam, ut ex virginali coniugio virgo filius nasceretur.*" Further details in Bucceroni, *Comment. de SS. Corde Iesu, de B. Virgine et de S. Iosepho*, pp. 228 sqq., Rome 1896.

72 *Frater*, ἀδελφός.

73 Cfr. Gen. XII, 5; XIII, 8; XXIX, 15, and, in explanation thereof, Lamy, *Comment. in Gen.*, 13, 8, Mechlin 1883.

74 Matth. XIII, 55.

75 Cfr. Matth. XXVII, 56.

76 Cfr. John XIX, 25: "*Stabant autem iuxta crucem Iesu mater eius et soror matris eius, Maria Cleophae* (Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Κλωπᾶ) *et Maria Magdalene.*"

77 Gal. I, 19.

of Cleophas and Mary, not of Joseph and Mary. That this "Iacobus Cleophae" is elsewhere called "Iacobus Alphæi" is presumably due to the circumstance that Κλωπᾶ and Ἀλφαῖος are merely two different Greek forms of the same Aramaic name. Now, if St. James the Less was a son of Cleophas (alias Alphæus), it follows that his brother Joseph, (who is also numbered among the "brethren of Jesus"), was not a son of Joseph and Mary. St. Jude, too, who introduces himself in his Epistle as "the brother of James," was probably a cousin of our Lord.[78]

γ) Another difficulty against the dogma of the perpetual virginity of Our Lady is taken from Matth. I, 18: "When his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost."[79] "Came together" (*convenirent*) in this case probably means, "dwelled together under the same roof." But even if the term were used in the sense of marital intercourse, "the πρὶν or πρὶν ἤ with infinitive, which follows, indicates either that the act was not performed or that its performance is regarded as of secondary importance."[80] "From the phrase 'before they came together' it does not follow," says St. Jerome, "that they came together afterwards; Holy Scripture merely inti-

78 Cfr. J. Friedlieb, *Das Leben Jesu Christi des Erlösers*, pp. 325 sqq., Paderborn 1887. There are other acceptable explanations. Consult on this topic especially Suarez, *De Myst. Vitae Christi*, disp. 5, sect. 4; also Schegg, *Jakobus der Bruder des Herrn und sein Brief*, p. 53, München 1883. The whole subject is treated with thoroughness by Al. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift*, pp. 79 sqq. (Engl. tr., pp. 85 sqq.). Against Zahn see M. Meinertz, *Der Jakobusbrief*, pp. 6-54, Freiburg 1905. A good summary of the problem in English will be found in the appendix to Durand-Bruneau, *The Childhood of Jesus Christ according to the Canonical Gospels*, pp. 259-316, Philadelphia 1910.

79 "*Quum esset desponsata mater eius Maria Ioseph, antequam convenirent* (πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτούς) *inventa est in utero habens de Spiritu Sancto.*"

80 Cfr. Al. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter*, p. 76 (Engl. tr., p. 82).

mates what did *not* happen." [81] Writing against Helvidius, the same Saint cleverly argues *ad hominem* in this fashion: "If I say: 'Helvidius died before he did penance for his sins,' does it follow that he did penance after his death?" [82]

δ) Still another text alleged against the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity is Matth. I, 25: "And he [Joseph] knew her [Mary] not till she brought forth her firstborn son." [83] Helvidius heretically concluded from this statement that Joseph "knew" (*i. e.*, had marital intercourse with) his spouse after she had brought forth her firstborn son. St. Jerome demonstrates the absurdity of this inference by pointing to such analogous texts as Ps. CIX, 1: "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool," and Gen. VIII, 6 sq.: ". . . the raven . . . did not return till the waters were dried up upon the earth." Does it follow, he asks, that Christ will no longer sit at the right hand of God the Father when His enemies lie defeated at His feet? Or did the raven return to the ark after the waters were dried up?

But does not the term "firstborn" imply that Mary gave birth to more children than one? Not at all, for, as St. Jerome points out, the Scriptures [84] frequently employ the word "firstborn" to denote a mother's first child, no matter whether it is followed by others or remains the only one.[85]

81 *In Matth.*, I, 18 (Migne, *P. L.*, XXVI, 24): "*Quod autem dicitur antequam convenirent, non sequitur quod postea convenerint, sed Scriptura, quod factum non sit, ostendit.*"

82 *In Matth.*, I, 18 sqq.

83 "*Et non cognoscebat eam, donec peperit* (ἕως οὗ ἔτεκεν) *filium suum primogenitum* (τὸν πρωτότοκον)."

84 Cfr. Ex. XXXIV, 19 sq., Num. XVIII, 15.

85 St. Jerome, *apud* Migne, *P. L.*, XXVI, 25: "*Mos est divinarum scripturarum, ut primogenitum non eum vocent, quem fratres sequuntur, sed eum qui primus natus est.*"

b) The belief in Mary's *virginitas post partum*, or, more generally speaking, her perpetual virginity, is so firmly rooted in primitive Tradition that the Fathers regard its denial as an insult to our Lord Himself.

Siricius and Bede indignantly charge the opponents of this dogma with "perfidy;" Gennadius accuses them of "blasphemy," St. Ambrose of "sacrilege," St. Jerome of "impiety," and St. Epiphanius of "a rashness exceeding all bounds." St. Basil declares: "Those who love Christ will not brook the assertion that the Mother of God ever ceased to be a virgin." [86] St. Ambrose enthusiastically exclaims: "But Mary did not fail, the mistress of virginity did not fail; nor was it possible that she who had borne God, should be regarded as bearing a man. And Joseph, the just man, assuredly did not so completely lose his mind as to seek carnal intercourse with the mother of God." [87] St. Jerome appeals in support of the dogma to Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, and other sub-Apostolic Fathers.[88] Mary is venerated as ever-virgin (ἀειπαρθένος) in

86 *Hom. in Chr. Gener.*, 25.

87 *De Inst. Virg.*, VI, 44: "*Sed non deficit Maria, non deficit virginitatis magistra; nec fieri poterat, ut quae Deum portaverat, portandum hominem arbitraretur. Nec Ioseph, vir iustus, in hanc prorupisset amentiam, ut matri Domini corporeo concubitu misceretur.*"

88 *De Perpet. Virginit. B. Mariae contra Helvid.*, 17: "*Numquid non possum tibi totam veterum scriptorum seriem commovere: Ignatium, Polycarpum, Irenæum, Iustinum M. multosque alios apostolicos et eloquentes viros, qui adversus Ebionem et Theodotum. . . . haec eadem sentientes plena sapientiae volumina conscripserunt? Quae si legisses aliquando, plus saperes.*"

the earliest liturgies,[89] and this title of honor evidently supposes that she remained a virgin all her life. It is in this sense that St. Augustine says in one of his sermons: "Behold the miracle of the Mother of our Lord: She conceived as a virgin, she gave birth as a virgin, she remained a virgin after child-birth." [90]

St. Thomas enumerates four principal reasons why it was morally necessary that the Blessed Virgin Mary should preserve perpetual virginity. These reasons are: (1) The unique character of Christ as the Only-begotten Son of God; (2) The honor and dignity of the Holy Ghost, who overshadowed her virginal womb; (3) The excellency of the title Deipara, and (4) The honor and chivalry of St. Joseph, who was commissioned to be the protector and guardian of his chaste spouse.[91]

Readings: — See the Readings following Section 1, pp. 35 sqq., *supra*, and in addition: St. Thomas, *S. Theol.*, 3a, qu. 28, art. 1-4, and the commentators, especially Billuart, *De Myst. Christi*, diss. 1, art. 3 sqq., and Suarez, *De Myst. Vitae Christi*, disp. 5, sect. 1 sqq.

The teaching of the Fathers is copiously expounded by Petavius, *De Incarnatione*, XIV, 3 sqq. and Thomassin, *De Incarnatione*, II, 3 sqq.

Cfr. also *Reinke, *Die Weissagung von der Jungfrau und vom Immanuel*, Münster 1848; Galfano, *La Vergine delle Vergini*,

89 Cfr. Renaudot, Vol. I, pp. 18, 42, 72, 113, 150.

90 "*Videte miraculum Matris dominicae: virgo concepit, virgo peperit, virgo post partum permansit.*" (*Serm. de Temp.*, 23.)

91 *Summa Theologica*, 3a, qu. 28, art. 3.

Palermo 1882.— Franzelin, *De Verbo Incarnato,* thes. 15, 4th ed., Rome 1910.—*Al. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift,* 2nd ed., pp. 11 sqq., Münster 1900 (English translation by F. Brossart, *The Mother of Jesus in Holy Scripture,* pp. 17 sqq., New York 1913).— J. H. Newman, *Select Treatises of St. Athanasius,* Vol. II, pp. 204 sqq., 9th ed., London 1903.— E. Neubert, *Marie dans l'Église Anténicéenne,* pp. 159-208, Paris 1908.

SECTION 4

MARY'S BODILY ASSUMPTION INTO HEAVEN

The doctrine of our Lady's bodily Assumption was brought prominently forward by a petition submitted to the Vatican Council, in 1870, by 204 Bishops, asking that this pious belief be defined as an article of faith.[1] The Assumption, consequently, is not yet a dogma, though Suarez says that "whoever would impugn this pious and religious belief would be held guilty of extreme rashness."[2] To-day, when so many ancient documents are recognized as spurious, this judgment is, perhaps, too severe.

1. THE DEATH OF OUR LADY.—History tells us nothing about the time when our Lady died or the circumstances of her death. Nor do we know where she was buried. Scripture is silent on all these points and the oldest extant accounts are based entirely on apocryphal sources. Though some theologians have denied the reality of Our Lady's death,[3] it has been a matter of universal belief from primitive times.

1 Cfr. Martin, *Conc. Vat. Document. Collectio*, p. 112, Paderborn 1873.

2 *De Myst. Vitae Christi*, disp. 21, sect 2: "*Summae temeritatis reus crederetur, qui tam piam religiosamque sententiam hodie impugnaret.*"

3 *E. g.*, Arnaldus, *Super Transitu B. Mariae Virginis Deiparae*, Genoa 1879; against him Berdani in the *Scuola Cattolica*, Milan 1880.

a) As we have already observed, there is no historical argument to prove the fact. In the fourth century, St. Epiphanius, after a careful investigation of the available evidence, confessed himself unable to arrive at a definite conclusion.[4] Nor have we any certain knowledge regarding the date of our Lady's demise or the place of her burial. Pseudo-Dionysius' account [5] of a miraculous meeting of the Apostles at her deathbed is merely a pious legend, which can claim no greater credence than the stories circulated at an early date regarding the death and alleged resurrection of the Master's favorite disciple, Saint John.[6] The recent controversy between Fonck and Nirschl as to whether the Blessed Virgin died at Ephesus or Jerusalem, has led to no positive results, and we must still acknowledge with Billuart that both opinions are equally probable.[7] The belief that our Lady died rests on the law of the universality of death, from which not even the Godman Himself was exempt.[8]

b) Since the sixth century the death of the Blessed Virgin is commemorated in the liturgies on August 15th.

The Sacramentary of Pope Gregory I (540–604) contains this passage: "To-day's festival is venerable to us, O Lord, because on this day the blessed Mother of God

4 *De Haer.*, 78, n. 11: "*Neque aut immortalem perseverasse definio, aut, utrum mortua sit, confirmare possum. . . . Sive igitur mortua sit nescimus, sive consepulta sit.*"

5 *De Divin. Nom.*, c. 3.

6 Cfr. C. Tischendorff, *Apocalypses Apocryphae, item Mariae Dormitio*, pp. 95 sqq., Lipsiae 1866; Lipsius, *Apokryphe Apostelgeschichten und Apostellegenden*, Leipzig 1887; Bardenhewer-Shahan, *Patrology*, pp. 113 sqq., Freiburg 1908.

7 *De Myst. Christi*, diss. 14, art. 1: "*Quo loco obierit Deipara, an Ephesi, an Ierosolomis, definiri non potest propter probabilitatem utriusque sententiae.*"

8 See the dogmatic treatise on Eschatology. Cfr. Jos. Nirschl, *Das Haus und Grab der hl. Jungfrau Maria*, Mainz 1900.

suffered temporal death, but it was not possible that she who gave birth to our incarnate Lord, Thy Son, should be subjugated by death."[9] A similar prayer is found in all the Roman missals published since the time of Pius V.

It goes without saying that the death of Our Lady is not to be regarded as a penalty for wrong-doing, nor yet as an effect of original sin. The immaculately conceived Mother of God was exempt from concupiscence[10] and the *debitum mortis*. Pope Pius V, in 1567, condemned the following proposition of Bajus: "No one except Christ is without original sin; consequently the Blessed Virgin died because of sin contracted through Adam."[11] It was meet and proper that the Mother of Christ should be made like unto her Divine Son. This conformity did not, however, require that she should die a martyr's death. Christ alone had to die for the sins of the world. Mary's was a spiritual martyrdom at the foot of the Cross, and she is therefore rightly called "Queen of Martyrs."[12] It is the common belief of Christians that she died a natural and painless death.[13]

2. THE DOGMATIC DATA FOR THE ASSUMPTION.—The bodily resurrection and assumption

9 "*Veneranda nobis, Domine, huius est diei festivitas, in qua sancta Dei genitrix mortem subiit temporalem, nec tamen mortis nexibus deprimi potuit, quae Filium tuum Dominum nostrum de se genuit incarnatum.*" (Migne, *P. L.*, LXXVIII, 133.)

10 *V. supra*, Section 2, Thesis 1.

11 Cfr. the seventy-third of the propositions of Baius condemned by Pope Pius V, A. D. 1567: "*Nemo praeter Christum est absque peccato originali; hinc B. Virgo mortua est propter peccatum ex Adam contractum.*"

12 St. Ambrose says, *In Luc.*, II, 61: "*Nec litera nec historia docet, ex hac vita Mariam corporalis necis passione migrasse; non enim anima, sed corpus materiali gladio transverberatur.*"

13 "*Nec partus poenam sensit nec obitus,*" says St. John Damascene. Albertus Magnus taught that she died in consequence of her intense

of our Lady can no more be established by historic proofs than her death and burial. There is no historical tradition on the subject of sufficient authenticity to furnish the basis for a dogmatic argument. The first five centuries present an empty void, and no historic bridge connects us with the eye-witnesses of the event. The apocrypha can furnish no solid argument.

Among the apocryphal sources may be reckoned all the accounts of the bodily Assumption of Our Lady attributed to St. Athanasius, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite, and St. John of Damascus. To make believe that he was a disciple of the Apostles, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite [14] tells of a journey which he claims to have made "to see the body which engendered life and bore God" [15] and in the course of which he met St. James, "the brother of God," [16] and "Peter, the most eminent and most ancient head of theologians."

St. John of Damascus has left us three genuine homilies on the bodily Assumption of Mary, to which we shall return further down. "A later hand has interpolated in the second homily (c. 18) the often-quoted but very enigmatical account of the dealings of the Empress Pulcheria with Juvenal, patriarch of Jerusalem, in reference to the sepulchre of Mary." [17] The fact that her tomb was found empty and that no relics remained of her body, gives color to the belief that she was assumed bodily into

love for her Divine Son and her burning desire to be reunited with Him in Heaven.

14 Cfr. *De Divin. Nom.*, III, 2.

15 *ἐπὶ τὴν θέαν τοῦ ζωαρχικοῦ καὶ θεοδόχου σώματος.*

16 *ὁ ἀδελφόθεος.*

17 Bardenhewer-Shahan, *Patrology*, p. 5.

Heaven; but they do not afford a dogmatic basis. It would be useless, therefore, to try to decide the question on purely historic evidence.

It may be objected: If the Assumption of Our Lady cannot be demonstrated to be an historic fact, how can theologians speak of it as "certain" and express the hope that it will eventually be raised to the rank of a dogma? The answer is that an insufficiently attested fact may be as surely proved by the dogmatic as by the historical method. Thus, for instance, there is no historic evidence by which we could establish the Immaculate Conception or the sinlessness of Our Lady. Similarly, belief in the Assumption did not originate entirely in historic documents, but mainly in dogmatic considerations intimately connected with our Lady's prerogatives as Deipara and confirmed by an Apostolic Tradition, which at first lay hidden, but came to the surface about the sixth century and continued its course to the present time, with all the marks of a revealed tradition.[18]

a) We come to the theological arguments in favor of the Assumption of our Lady.

Chief among these is the doctrine of the incorruptibility of her body.

We can scarcely assume that the virginal body which conceived and gave birth to the Godman became a prey to corruption. Not that physical decay involves a moral taint; but Christian piety has always preferred to hold, with pseudo-Jerome, that the body of God's holy Mother

18 Cfr. L. Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien*, pp. 123 sqq., Paris 1889 (English ed.: *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution*, London 1903, pp. 269 sqq.); Al. König, *Geschichte der Aufbewahrung und Verehrung der Gottesmutter-Reliquien auf Erden*, Ratisbon 1897; Kellner, *Heortology*, pp. 235 sqq., London 1908.

escaped the horrors of the grave.[19] Incorruptibility is distinctly emphasized as an attribute of Divine Motherhood in the liturgy of Pope Gregory the Great.[20] Very properly, therefore, is the passage: "Thou wilt not give thy holy one to see corruption" (Ps. XV, 10) applied to Mary, because, as Deipara, she was of one flesh with her Divine Son (*Caro Iesu, caro Mariae*).

The incorruptibility of our Lady's sacred body may also be inferred from her perpetual virginity. There is an inseparable causal connection between *incorruptio virginalis* and *incorruptio corporalis* — the one is the fruitage of the other. This is emphasized in the liturgical prayers of the Church and the writings of the later Fathers. Thus we read in the Mozarabic liturgy, which originated in Spain after the fifth century: "Ingenerate Father on high, who hast conferred such great prerogatives upon the glorious Mary, . . . as she merited to be assumed to-day into the choirs of the angels and virgins, or to be gladdened by the gift of incorrupt flesh, so do Thou extirpate carnal desires in us and admit us to that same place . . . O ineffable chastity, O immaculate virginity, which deserved to be admitted to the abode of the blessed in this novel and unspeakable manner!"[21] St. Andrew of Crete (died about 720) expresses himself thus in a homily for the festival of the Assumption: "As the womb [of Mary] was in no wise cor-

19 *Tract. de Assumpt. B. Mariae Virginis*, c. 6: "*Illud ergo sacratissimum corpus escam vermibus traditum in communi sorte putredinis, quia sentire non valeo, dicere perhorresco.*"

20 *V. supra*, pp. 106 sq.

21 "*Ingenite Pater summe, qui tanta ac talia beneficii munera Virgini gloriosae Mariae contulisti, . . . sicut illa hodie inter angelorum virginumque choros meruit assumi sive dono illibatae carnis feliciter iocundari, sic nos stimulo perfecte exstirpato carnali beatiores ibidem admitte. . . . O ineffabilis castitas et immaculata virginitas, quae novo et ineffabili modo assumi in superna meruit sede.*" (Migne, *P. L.*, LXXXV, 822, 824.)

rupted by parturition, so her flesh did not perish after death." [22] As the virginal body of Our Divine Saviour was preserved from decay in the grave, so the body of His immaculate Mother must have escaped corruption, because, by virtue of a special privilege, it was not a *corpus peccati,* and consequently not a *corpus mortis.*

b) From the incorruptibility of our Lady's body to its early resurrection, *i. e.,* her bodily Assumption into Heaven, is but one remove. It is impossible to assume that Christ should wait for the day when all men will rise from the dead, to re-unite the virginal body of His Mother with her pure soul.

St. Bernard insists that if the body of our Lady had not been assumed into Heaven, God would not have concealed its resting-place. But this is hardly a cogent argument. God might have chosen to conceal our Lady's tomb for the same reason that led Him to hide the grave of Moses,[23] *viz.:* to prevent idolatrous practices. Again, He might have removed the sacred corpse to some extramundane place, for instance, that where the living bodies of Enoch and Elias await the end of the world. The Benedictine monk Usuard (about A. D. 860) seems to have favored the last-mentioned theory.[24]

But there is one strictly dogmatic consideration which sweeps away all doubt in the corporeal assumption of

22 *Or. de Dormit. B. Mariae Virginis,* 2, 5: "*Ut minime corruptus est parturientis uterus, ita nec periit defunctae caro.*"

23 Cfr. Deut. XXXIV, 6.

24 Cfr. his *Martyrologium,* Venice 1745: "*Dormitio sanctae Dei genitricis Mariae. . . . Quo autem venerabile illud Spiritus Sancti templum nutu et consilio divino occultatum sit, plus elegit sobrietas Ecclesiae cum pietate nesciri, quam aliquid frivolum et apocryphum inde tenendo docere.*"

Our Lady. As the Mother of God Mary was conceived without original taint, free from concupiscence, and absolutely exempt from personal sin; therefore she could not possibly be subject to the dominion of death up to the time of the general resurrection. We have shown on a previous page that her exemption from original sin necessarily involves exemption from the penalties of sin. Consequently, she was also exempt from death. If nevertheless, to conform herself more closely to her Divine Son, she paid tribute to death, her dignity as Deipara and Ever-Virgin demanded at least this much that she should forthwith — the legend has it on the third day — be raised from the dead and assumed with body and soul into Heaven. The Scotistic syllogism *"Potuit, decuit, ergo fecit"* would seem to apply to the doctrine of the Assumption with precisely the same force with which it bears on the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople (died 733), evidently felt this when he exclaimed: "Let death recede from thee, O Mother of God, who hast brought life to mortal men! Let the grave recede from thee, because thou hast become a divine foundation of unspeakable grandeur! Away with the dust; for thou art a new structure, being the mistress of those who have become spoilt in the mire of clay! . . . Thou hast obtained the honorary title of Mother of God . . . Therefore it was becoming that thy body, which had received into itself the Life, should not be enshrouded in deathly corruption." [25]

c) These more or less aprioristic reasons find a strong support in Scripture. The Bishops who,

[25] *Or. in Dormit. B. Mariae*, 2. (Migne, *P. G.*, XCVIII, 359).

at the time of the Vatican Council, petitioned the Holy See to dogmatize the doctrine of the Assumption, appealed mainly to the traditional interpretation of the Protevangelium.[26]

They argued as follows: "According to the Apostolic teaching [recorded in Rom. V, 8, 1 Cor. XV, 24, 26, 54, 57, Heb. II, 14, 15 and other texts], when Jesus triumphed over the Ancient Serpent (Satan), He gained a threefold victory over sin and its effects, *i. e.,* concupiscence and death. Since the Mother of God is associated in a singular manner in this triumph with her Son, (Gen. III, 15), which is also the unanimous opinion of the Fathers: we do not doubt that in the aforementioned [Scriptural] passage this same Blessed Virgin is presignified as illustrious by that threefold victory: over sin by her immaculate conception, over concupiscence by her virginal motherhood, and in like manner over hostile death by a triumphant resurrection similar to that of her Son."[27] In matter of fact the "enmity" which God placed between Mary and the serpent was directed not only against sin but likewise against the fruits of sin, *i. e.,* concupiscence and physical death.[28] Death would have actually triumphed over the "woman"

26 *V. supra,* pp. 43 sq.

27 "*Quum iuxta apostolicam doctrinam (Rom. V, 8; 1 Cor. XV, 24, 26, 54, 57; Heb. II, 14, 15) aliisque locis traditam triplici victoria de peccato et de peccati fructibus: concupiscentia et morte veluti ex partibus integrantibus constituatur ille triumphus, quem de satana, antiquo serpente, Christus retulit, quumque Gen. III, 15 Deipara exhibeatur singulariter associata Filio suo in hoc triumpho accedente unanimi SS. Patrum suffragio: non dubitamus quin in praefato oraculo eadem B. Virgo triplici illa victoria praesignificetur illustris adeoque non secus ac de peccato per immaculatam conceptionem et concupiscentia per virginalem maternitatem, sic etiam de inimica morte singularem triumphum relatura per acceleratam ad similitudinem Filii sui resurrectionem ibidem praenuntiata fuit.*" (*Collect. Lacensis,* Vol. VII, p. 869).

28 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *God the Author of Nature and the Supernatural,* pp. 222 sq.

(Mary) had she been subject to decay and were her resurrection postponed to the Last Judgment. Properly interpreted, therefore, the Protevangelium contains a prediction, not only of the Immaculate Conception of our Lady, but likewise — though not so clearly — of her bodily assumption into Heaven. Side by side with her Divine Son Mary triumphs over death.

To this may be added another consideration. It is the teaching of Fathers and theologians that the Ark of the Covenant, which was made of pure gold and overshadowed by a cloud, was preëminently a type of the Blessed Virgin Mary.[29] Now the Psalmist says: "Arise, O Lord, into thy resting place: thou and the ark, which thou hast sanctified."[30] And St. John in the Apocalypse: "The temple of God was opened in heaven: and the ark of his testament was seen in his temple. . . . And a great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun."[31]

d) The most reliable source of Catholic belief in the bodily assumption of Mary is ecclesiastical tradition, which became crystallized as early as the sixth century and, despite the elimination of apocryphal legends, persisted up to the present time—a proof that the belief of the faithful did not originate in, nor owe its diffusion to, the apocrypha. The tradition that Our Lady was

29 *V. supra*, p. 17.

30 Ps. CXXXI, 8: "*Surge, Domine, in requiem tuam, tu et arca sanctificationis tuae.*"

31 Apoc. XI, 19: "*Et apertum est templum Dei in coelo: visa est arca testamenti eius in templo eius.*" Apoc. XII, 1: "*Signum magnum apparuit in coelo, mulier amicta sole* (*γυνὴ περιβεβλημένη τὸν ἥλιον*)." — Cfr. Scheeben, *Dogmatik*, Vol. III, pp. 584 sq.; Al. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift*, pp. 207 sq. (English ed., pp. 257 sqq.).

assumed bodily into Heaven emerged into broad daylight in the sixth century and manifested itself practically in the liturgical celebration of the festival of her Assumption, and theoretically in the homiletic teaching of the Fathers in connection with this festival.

a) Under different names (*dormitio, depositio, pausatio, assumptio B. Mariae Virginis*, κοίμησις τῆς θεοτόκου Μαρίας) this feast from the very beginning had for its object the assumption of our Lady with soul and body into Heaven. In Italy and Spain it was celebrated August 15, in Gaul, January 18.[32] In the East the pious Emperor Mauritius (582-602) introduced the celebration of the feast of the κοίμησις (falling asleep) of the Blessed Virgin and commanded it to be celebrated on the fifteenth of August in all those places of the Byzantine Empire where it was not yet observed.[33] This accounts for the fact that the schismatic Greek Church has faithfully retained the custom of solemnizing the festival of the Assumption. At a council held in Jerusalem, A. D. 1672, the schismatics confessed: "Though the immaculate body of Mary was locked in the tomb, yet, like Christ, she was assumed and migrated to Heaven on the third

32 A Gothic missal used in Gaul up to the eighth century contains this passage: "*Fratres carissimi, fusis precibus Dominum imploremus, ut eius indulgentiâ illuc defuncti liberentur a tartaro, quo beatae Virginis translatum est corpus de sepulcro. . . . Quo* [*tempore*] *Virgo Dei genitrix de mundo migravit ad Christum, quae nec de corruptione suscepit contagium nec resolutionem pertulit in sepulcro: pollutione libera, germine gloriosa, assumptione secura, paradiso dote praelata. . . . Recte ab ipso suscepta es in assumptione feliciter, quem pie suscepisti conceptura per fidem, ut quae terrae non eras conscia, non teneret rupes inclusa.*" (Migne, *P. L.*, LXXII, 245.) Other passages of similar tenor are quoted by Scheeben, *Dogmatik*, Vol. III, n. 1757.

33 Cfr. Nicephorus Callistus, *Hist. Eccl.*, XVII, 28.

day." [34] The Armenians declared in their symbol of union (A. D. 1342): "The Church of the Armenians believes and holds that the holy Mother of God was by the power of Christ assumed with her body into Heaven." [35]

True, the idea underlying the celebration of the festival of the Assumption was now and then temporarily obscured, as may be seen from the Martyrology of Usuard, quoted above.[36] But these temporary obscurations were not nearly so frequent nor so grave as those which retarded the development of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Then, too, the doubts which arose with regard to the Assumption were occasioned, not by apocryphal stories, but rather by the ecclesiastical condemnation of certain apocryphal books, as, for example, the rejection by the *Decretum Gelasianum* of the *Liber de Transitu Beatae Mariae Virginis,* falsely attributed to St. Melito of Sardes.[37] But all doubts were ultimately dispelled.

β) Synchronously with the introduction of the feast of the Assumption the later Fathers testified in favor of the doctrine upon which it was based. The earliest testimony we know of in the Western Church is this utterance of St. Gregory of Tours (+ 596): "The Lord commanded the holy body [of Mary after her death] to be borne on a cloud to Paradise, where, reunited to its soul, and exulting with the Elect, it enjoys the never

34 "*Quamvis conclusum in sepulcro fuerit immaculatum corporis Mariae tabernaculum, in coelum tamen uti Christus fuerat assumptus, tertiâ et ipsâ die in coelum migravit.*" (Hardouin, *Concil.*, XI, 199.)

35 "*Ecclesia Armenorum credit et tenet, quod S. Dei genitrix virtute Christi assumpta fuit in coelum cum corpore.*"

36 *Supra*, p. 111.

37 Cfr. Probst, *Die ältesten römischen Sakramentarien*, pp. 143 sqq., Münster 1892; H. Kihn, *Patrologie*, Vol. I, p. 169, Paderborn 1904.

ending bliss of eternity."[38] The Patriarch Modestus, who preceded St. Sophronius as Bishop of Jerusalem (+ 634), left a panegyric on the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin under the title: Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὴν κοίμησιν τῆς ὑπεραγίας δεσποίνης ἡμῶν θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας.[39]

Our most important witnesses are St. Andrew of Crete (+ 720), St. Germanus, Patriarch of Byzantium (+ 733), and especially St. John of Damascus (died after 754). Damascene's three homilies on the *Dormitio* (εἰς τὴν κοίμησιν), written for the Feast of the Assumption, "present the bodily Assumption of the Mother of God into Heaven as an ancient heirloom of Catholic faith, and declare that their sole purpose is to develop and establish what in a brief and almost too concise a manner the son has inherited from the father, according to the common saying."[40]

How the Greeks conceived the *Dormitio* of the Blessed Virgin appears from a panegyric composed for the fifteenth of August by St. Theodore Studita (about 759–826). "The true mountain of Sion," he says, "on which, as the Psalmist sings, God condescended to dwell, migrates from among these terrestrial hills and approaches the celestial mountains. To-day the terrestrial heaven, clothed in the garb of immutability, is transplanted to a better and eternal habitation. To-day the divinely-illumined spiritual moon ascends towards the sun of justice and takes leave of this life to re-arise in the splendor of immortality. To-day the golden shrine

38 "*Dominus susceptum corpus sanctum* [*Mariae mortuae*] *in nube deferri iussit in paradisum, ubi nunc resumptâ animâ cum electis eius exsultans aeternitatis bonis nullo occasuris fine perfruitur.*" (*Mirac.*, I, 4, *apud* Migne, *P. L.*, LXXI, 708.)

39 Reprinted in Migne, *P. G.*, LXXXVI, 2, 3277 sqq.

40 Bardenhewer-Shahan, *Patrology*, p. 588.

which God Himself made is removed from the terrestrial tents to the heavenly Jerusalem." [41]

γ) Is the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin a *veritas proxime definibilis?* In regard to this question opinions may legitimately differ. Possibly the development and solidification of the dogmatic basis of this doctrine will yet require prolonged labor on the part of Catholic theologians. A long step forward has been taken by setting aside the historic method and basing the argument on strictly dogmatic grounds. The theological as well as the Scriptural argument seem in this question to have but a secondary and subsidiary value, and the case for the Assumption rests mainly on an ecclesiastical tradition which has all the distinguishing characteristics of Apostolicity. In our humble opinion the argument from tradition is so strong that the formal definition of the Assumption is but a question of time. The opportuneness of a solemn definition will hardly be disputed. Perhaps the Church will see fit to obviate certain difficulties by formally defining the bodily Assumption of Our Lady and leaving her physical death to be taught as a theological conclusion. The definition of the Assumption would be the last jewel in the crown of Our Blessed Lady.

READINGS: — Billuart, *De Myst. Christi,* diss. 14, art. 1–2.— Gaudin, *Assumptio Corporea Mariae Virginis Vindicata,* Paris 1670.— *Morgott, *Die Mariologie des hl. Thomas,* pp. 117 sqq., Freiburg 1878.— *Agostino Lana, *La Resurrezione e Corporea Assunzione al Cielo della S. Vergine Madre di Dio,* Rome 1880. — Vaccari, *De B. Virginis Mariae Morte, Resurrectione et in Coelos Gloriosa Assumptione,* 2d ed., Ferrari 1881.— *Scheeben, *Dogmatik,* Vol. III, § 281, Freiburg 1882.— Jannucci, *Firmitudo*

41 For the full text of this picturesque panegyric see Migne, *P. G.,* CVII, 159. Cfr. Pesch, *Prael. Dogmat.,* Vol. IV, 3rd ed., pp. 349 sqq., Freiburg 1909.

Catholicae Veritatis de Psychosomatica Assumptione Deiparae, Turin 1884.— Bucceroni, *Commentarii . . . de B. Virgine Maria,* 4th ed., pp. 193 sqq., Rome 1896.— Chr. Pesch, *Praelectiones Dogmaticae,* Vol. IV, 3rd ed., pp. 349 sqq., Freiburg 1909.— G. B. Tepe, *Institutiones Theologicae,* Vol. III, pp. 721 sqq., Paris 1896.— Di Pietro, *L'Assunzione di Maria in Cielo secondo la Storia e la Tradizione,* S. Benigno Cavanese 1903.— F. G. Holweck, *Mariä Himmelfahrt,* St. Louis 1910.— F. O'Neill, "The Assumption of the Bl. Virgin according to the Teaching of Pius X and St. Thomas," in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record,* 44th year, No. 524, pp. 113-136.— P. Renaudin, *La Doctrine de l'Assomption de la T. S. Vièrge, Sa Definibilité comme Dogme de Foi Divine Catholique,* Paris 1913.

On the death of the Blessed Virgin Mary, cfr. Suarez, *De Myst. Vitae Christi,* disp. 21, sect. 1 sqq.; Canisius, *De Maria Virgine,* V, 3 sqq., Ingolstadt 1577; Benedict XIV, *De Festis Beatae Mariae Virginis,* II, 8; Arnaldus, *Super Transitu B. Mariae Virginis Deiparae,* Genoa 1879; J. Nirschl, *Das Grab der hl. Jungfrau Maria,* Mainz 1896.

CHAPTER II

THE POSITIVE PREROGATIVES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

In the preceding Chapter we have dealt with what are generally called the negative privileges of the Blessed Virgin Mary. These same privileges may also, in a sense, be conceived as positive, in so far, namely, as they constitute her an ideal human being and consist in a series of special graces; but essentially they are negative, because they denote the absence of some defect (*privatio, στέρησις*).

Our Lady's positive privileges, properly so called, are: (1) secondary mediatorship and (2) hyperdulic venerability.

SECTION I

MARY'S SECONDARY MEDIATORSHIP

1. State of the Question.—In calling the Blessed Virgin *mediatrix* we do not mean to deny that Jesus Christ is our sole Mediator.[1] The mediation of Mary rests entirely upon that of her Divine Son and would be utterly ineffective without it.

a) Christ, who is our sole and natural Mediator, obtained the power of mediation for His Blessed Mother by His death on the Cross. Hence to acknowledge Mary as our mediatrix does not detract from the mediatorship of Jesus, as most Protestants allege, but confirms that dogma and leads to a higher estimation of it. As the fatherhood of God loses nothing through the co-existence with it of an earthly fatherhood, and as the sovereignty of mundane princes does not detract from, but rather emphasizes and confirms the dominion of the almighty Ruler of heaven and earth, so the derived mediatorship of the Blessed Virgin Mary does not derogate from, but adds new lustre to, that of her Divine Son. The former is subordinate to the latter as an instrumental to a principal cause, and it stands to reason that the mediatorial operation of Christ increases in the same measure in which it employs the agency of mediate or instrumental causes and endows these with efficiency.

1 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Soteriology*, pp. 5 sqq., St. Louis, 1914.

b) This must be our guiding principle in defining the mediatorship of Mary. Unfortunately, theologians, ascetic writers, and preachers have not always used due caution in this matter. Some have attributed to the Blessed Virgin Mary certain honorary titles which are apt to obscure the dogmatic teaching of the Church in regard to the sole mediatorship of Our Lord. We are perfectly willing to allow for rhetorical exaggeration; but zeal for the honor of the Blessed Virgin should not lead theologians to neglect their plain duty of safeguarding the Person and the work of the Redeemer.

The following three propositions may serve as guiding principles in this matter:

α) Jesus Christ is our sole Mediator *per se.*

β) The mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is entirely secondary and subordinate to that of her Divine Son.

γ) Since, however, Mary is the Mother of God, her mediatorship transcends that of all the angels and saints and consequently constitutes an altogether unique privilege.

c) In consonance with these principles Fathers and theologians very properly style our Lady *liberatrix, salvatrix, reparatrix, restauratrix, reconciliatrix,* and *cooperatrix* or *socia Redemptoris.* But it would be wrong to call her *redemptrix,* because this title obscures the important truth that she herself was redeemed through the merits of Jesus Christ by what theologians technically term preredemption.[2] Even the title *coredemptrix* had better be avoided as misleading. The titles *redemptrix* and *coredemptrix* were never applied to the Blessed Virgin before the sixteenth century; they are the invention of

2 *V. supra,* p. 41.

comparatively recent writers (Castelplanio, Faber, P. Minges, O. F. M.,[3] and others).

There is another class of honorary titles sometimes applied to Mary, which imply the exercise of priestly functions, *e. g., sacerdotissa, consacerdotissa,* or high priestess. These, too, should be avoided, for the Blessed Virgin was not commissioned to perform sacerdotal functions, nor did she ever claim hierarchic rights. At the most we might call her Deaconess of Christ (*diaconissa Christi*), because she ministered to our Divine Saviour in the work of Redemption and humbly professed herself "a handmaid of the Lord."[4] The safest course is to follow the approved usage of the Church (*e. g.,* in the "*Salve Regina*" and the Litany of Loreto), which agrees with that of the Fathers and all sober-minded Scholastics, and to interpret occasional exaggerations and symbolic appellations in accordance with the dogmatic teaching of the Church.

d) The term which most appropriately and comprehensively describes our Blessed Lady's part in the Redemption is undoubtedly *mediatrix,* which is sanctioned by primitive Christian usage and embodies all that can be said on the subject.

2. Dogmatic Proof.—The Blessed Virgin Mary deserves to be called by the ancient traditional title of *mediatrix* for two reasons. First, because she co-operated in a unique manner in the Redemption, and secondly, because she is our powerful intercessor in Heaven.

3 *Compendium Theologiae Dogmaticae Specialis,* Vol. I, p. 204, Munich, 1901.

4 Luke I, 38.

a) By voluntarily assuming the office of Deipara, Mary made possible the Incarnation and consequently our Redemption. The importance of this fact is pointed out by St. Jerome: "After the Virgin conceived in her womb and gave birth to her Son, the curse was wiped out; death [came upon the human race] through Eve, life through Mary." [5] St. Ambrose teaches that the sanctification of John the Baptist in his mother's womb was due to the mediatorship of Mary.[6]

The Blessed Virgin, furthermore, incalculably advanced the salvation of mankind by her virtuous life. As virgin, mother, and wife she furnishes a brilliant example of all virtues. The female sex in particular is indebted to her for its liberation from the contemptible state into which it had fallen. We can form an idea of the moral value of her life if we consider what would probably be the condition of the human family and civil society in general without her. The welfare of both family and State depends on the purity of woman. Millions of men as well as women owe the victory they have gained over the demon

5 "*Postquam vero Virgo concepit in utero et peperit Filium, soluta maledictio est; mors per Evam, vita per Mariam.*" (*Ep. ad Eustoch.*, 22.)

6 *In Luc.*, II, 29: "*Non enim sola familiaritas est causa quod diu mansit, sed etiam tanti vatis profectus. Nam si primo ingressu tantus processus exstitit, ut ad salutationem Mariae exsultaret infans in utero, repleretur Spiritu Sancto mater infantis, quantum putamus usu tanti temporis sanctae Mariae addidisse praesentiam?*" Other texts quoted by Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift*, pp. 214 sqq.

of impurity to the example of her who is the ideal virgin and mother.

Lastly, the Blessed Virgin may be said after a fashion to have co-operated in the atonement, because she formed the Divine Victim in her chaste womb, prepared Him for the slaughter, and, standing beneath the Cross, offered Him up for the salvation of mankind. This fact justifies the attribution to her of the honorary title of *diacona sacrificii* (θυηφόρος). The spiritual martyrdom which she suffered at the foot of the Cross earned for her the twofold title of "Queen of Martyrs" and "Help of Christians." This thought deserves to be developed a little more fully.

We need but consider Mary's ardent love for her Divine Son, the excruciating tortures He suffered, and the terrible blasphemies to which she was compelled to listen, to appreciate the agony that pierced her soul during our Lord's dolorous passion and death. Simeon's prophecy: "A sword shall pierce thy soul" [7] was so literally fulfilled under the Cross that St. Bernardine of Siena was able to say without exaggeration: "The pain suffered by the Blessed Virgin was so intense that if it were divided among her fellow-creatures, they would all die on the spot. The Blessed Virgin Mary, standing beneath the

[7] Luke II, 35.

Cross, suffered all this for us, and thus became our mother and was declared to be such by her crucified Son Himself."[8] It is the teaching of many Scholastics since St. Anselm that our dying Saviour, when He uttered the memorable words: "Woman, behold thy son. . . . Behold thy mother,"[9] committed His Blessed Mother to the entire human race in the person of St. John, and appointed her the spiritual mother of all His brethren. Bishop Schaefer interprets this touching scene as follows: "Mary . . . stands at the foot of the Cross not merely as the mother of her dying Son, but as the mother of Him who is the Redeemer of mankind. Hence the Son, speaking in His capacity as Messias, addresses her as 'Woman.' The time when, according to the prediction of the Protevangelium, the 'seed' of the woman (taking the term in the sense of an individual person) was to crush the head of the 'serpent,' is at hand. But we also observe how at the very same moment the 'serpent' crushes the heel of this 'seed,' in that Christ dies through the very instrumentality of that sacred manhood by which we are redeemed. Beneath the Cross stands, among others, the mother of this one

8 "*Tantus fuit dolor Virginis, ut si in omnes creaturas divideretur, omnes subito perirent: haec omnia B. Virgo Maria stans sub cruce pro nobis passa est, ita ut et mater nostra sit facta et ut talis a crucifixo Filio declarata.*" (*Serm.*, 61, art. 3, c. 2.) On the prophecy of Simeon see Schaefer, *op. cit.*, pp. 170 sqq. (English ed. pp. 180 sqq.).

9 John XIX, 26 sq.

'seed,' who is Christ—she, the woman whom the Proto-Gospel had already pointed out to humanity both as the mother of Jesus and the new Eve or mother of all those to be endowed with supernatural life. . . . And henceforth Mary receives her spiritual 'seed.' Christ's words: 'Behold thy son,' must be interpreted in accordance with this idea. Coming from the Messias, it is a message of salvation for all the faithful who gather under the Cross. Of all the Apostles called by Jesus, . . . only one, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' followed Him to the Cross, thus representing those that were to be saved and for whom, as a price, the Precious Blood was shed." [10]

We can show by still another argument that Mary's sublime office of Deipara destined her to be the spiritual mother and consequently the mediatrix of all Christians.

α) As the antithesis of Eve, Mary is the "mother of all the living" in a manner similar to that in which her Divine Son, the "second Adam," who crushed the serpent's head, is the spiritual leader of all those whom He has redeemed by His passion and death. Eve was the mother of perdition for all men (*ianua mortis*); Mary must consequently, *e contrario*, be the mother of salva-

10 *Op. cit.*, pp. 238 sq. (English edition, p. 251). Cfr. Bucceroni, *Comment. de B. Virgine Maria*, pp. 178 sqq.

tion for all (*ianua vitae*). Or, in the words of St. Irenæus, "As Eve . . . was through her disobedience the cause of death to herself and the entire human race, so Mary . . . through her obedience was the source of salvation to herself and the whole human race." [11] The same writer says elsewhere: "If the former [Eve] was disobedient to God, the latter [Mary] was persuaded to obey Him, in order that the Virgin Mary might be the advocate of the virgin Eve." [12] Bardenhewer comments on this passage as follows: "Where the Latin translation has *advocata,* the Greek text most probably had παράκλητος. The term means *causa salutis* and has become memorable by being incorporated into the liturgy of the Church (*advocata nostra*)." [13]

β) St. Paul teaches that we become spiritual brethren of Christ by Baptism.[14] If this is true, then those who are baptized are *eo ipso* also spiritual children of Mary.

γ) The Redemption was conditioned upon the consent of the Blessed Virgin to become the mother of God. The physical birth of our Saviour meant the moral regeneration of all mankind. Consequently Mary became our spiritual

11 *Adv. Haer.,* III, 22, 4.

12 *Adv. Haer.,* V, 19, 1.

13 *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur,* Vol. I, p. 521, Freiburg 1902.

14 Rom. VIII, 29; Heb. II, 11, 17; cfr. Matth. XXVIII, 10; John XX, 17.

mother when she consented to become the mother of God.

δ) The ideal woman must be conceived as sharing in the Saviour's affection for all men. Mary is the spiritual mother of mankind also through the love she bears for all.[15]

b) Our Lady is furthermore the mediator of mankind in Heaven, where she effectively intercedes for the Church as a whole and for each individual Christian in particular.

α) This belief dates back to primitive times and is exemplified by many pictures found in the Roman catacombs.[16] The "Memorare," often erroneously ascribed to St. Bernard, is a medieval pendant of the famous κανὼν παρακλητικός of the Greek Church.[17] To form a correct idea of the nature of Mary's celestial intercession we must remember that it differs essentially, and not only in degree, from the heavenly *interpellatio Christi.*[18] Our Lord intercedes for us as the royal High Priest, Mary as a loving mother. Their intercession differs both as to nature and power in precisely the same way in which the Godman (θεάνθρωπος) differs from the Deipara (θεοτόκος).

β) The intercession of the Blessed Virgin is naturally far more powerful than that of the other

15 These considerations are developed by St. Bernard. Cfr. B. Haeusler, *De Mariae Plenitudine Gratiae secundum S. Bernardum,* Frib. Helv. 1901.

16 Cfr. Thos. J. Shahan, *The Blessed Virgin in the Catacombs,* Baltimore 1892.

17 Cfr. Ballerini, *Sylloge,* I, 481.

18 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Soteriology,* pp. 134 sqq.

saints, for while they are friends of God, she is His Mother. "She is the mediator between us and Christ," says St. Bonaventure, "even as Christ is the mediator between us and God." [19] For this reason, too, her mediation is universal, whereas that of the Angels and Saints is limited in scope. From this point of view there is justification in the probable, though not strictly theological opinion of St. Alphonsus de' Liguori, so hotly contested by Muratori, that our Divine Saviour bestows His graces on mankind through His Blessed Mother, who may therefore be truly called "*dispensatrix omnium gratiarum.*" It is in this same sense that St. Bernard refers to her as the "*uberrimus gratiarum aquaeductus,*" and Suarez says: "Therefore the Church prays more frequently and, as it were, in a higher manner to the Blessed Virgin Mary than to the other saints." [20] St. Bernardine of Siena teaches that "every grace which is communicated to this world has a threefold origin: it flows from God to Christ, from Christ to the Virgin, and from the Virgin to us." [21] In the light of this probable teaching, (which cannot, however, be positively

19 "*Ista est beata virgo, quae mediatrix est inter nos et Christum, sicut Christus inter nos et Deum.*" (*Comment. in Quatuor Libros Sent.*, III, dist. 3, p. 1, art. 1, qu. 2.)

20 *De Myst. Vitae Christi,* disp. 23, sect. 2, n. 5: "*Et ideo ecclesia et frequentius et altiori quodam modo orat ad Virginem quam ad reliquos sanctos.*"

21 "*Omnis gratia, quae huic saeculo communicatur, triplicem habet processum: nam a Deo in Christum, a Christo in Virginem, a Virgine in nos ordinatissime dispensatur.*" (Quoted by Leo XIII in his Encyclical Letter of Sept. 8th, 1894.)

proved from the Fathers),[22] we must judge the titles applied to the Blessed Virgin in the Litany of Loreto and also certain rather extravagant eulogies that occur in the writings of the Fathers. It must always be borne in mind (1) that the dispensation of graces through the agency of our Lady is not a necessary condition of salvation but a free divine ordinance, and (2) that the manner by which she obtains graces for us is simply and solely her maternal intercession, based upon the merits of Jesus Christ.

A Catholic may confidently ask Mary for her powerful intercession without ever entertaining the foolish apprehension that there is danger of offending Christ by addressing Him through His Blessed Mother. The dogmatic teaching of the Church is too clear to allow any intelligent Catholic to believe that the Blessed Virgin is able to accomplish anything without her Son. In its last analysis, therefore, every prayer addressed to Our Lady is addressed to Christ, *i. e.*, God.

γ) In this as in so many other things the Church herself carefully guides the faithful both by word and example. She directs her liturgical prayers sometimes to the tri-une God, sometimes to Jesus Christ, and then again to the Blessed Virgin Mary, but invariably emphasizes her belief in Christ as the sole Mediator by conclud-

22 Cfr. Petavius, *De Incarnatione*, XIV, 9, 8.

ing with the words: "through Christ our Lord." [23] Despite the forbearance with which she tolerates certain excesses and extravagances,[24] the Church will never allow an exaggerated cult of the Virgin to obscure the dignity and majesty of Christ. This is plainly apparent from the condemnation of a certain novel representation of the Madonna and Child called "*Domina Christi*," and the rejection of the new-fangled title "Queen of the Heart of Jesus." [25]

READINGS: — P. Ventura, *La Madre di Dio Madre degli Uomini*, 2d ed., Rome 1885.— *A. Nicolas, *La Vièrge Marie et le Plan Divin, Nouvelles Études Philosophiques sur le Christianisme*, 4 vols., Paris 1852-61 (German translation by Reiching, Ratisbon 1856 sqq.) — Lapale, *Marie Immaculée et la Femme Chrétienne d'après le Plan Divin*, Paris 1881.— J. Körber, *Maria im System der Heilsökonomie*, Ratisbon 1883.— L. W. Wörnhart, *Maria die wunderbare Mutter Gottes und der Menschen*, Innsbruck 1896.— Terrien, S. J., *La Mère de Dieu et la Mère des Hommes d'après les Pères et la Théologie*, 4 vols., Paris 1900 sqq.—*Al. Schaefer, *Die Gottesmutter in der Hl. Schrift*, 2nd ed., pp. 145 sqq., 209 sqq., Münster 1900 (English ed., New York 1913, pp. 153 sqq., 220 sqq.).

Numerous Patristic references will be found in Petavius, *De Incarnatione*, XIV, 9.

23 *Per Christum Dominum nostrum.*

24 On "Catholic Excesses in Devotion to the Blessed Virgin" see the admirable chapter in Cardinal Newman's Letter addressed to Dr. Pusey on the occasion of his *Eirenicon*, A. D. 1864 (*Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching Considered*, Vol. II, pp. 89-118, London 1907).

25 Decree of the S. Congr. of the Holy Office, Feb. 28, 1875. The text of this decree may be read in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* for April, 1875. Cfr. Newman, *op. cit.*, II, 169 sq.— On the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin cfr. Thos. Esser, O. P., *U. L. Frauen Rosenkranz*, Paderborn 1889; De Buscher, *Le Rosaire de Marie*, Bruges 1901. Certain devotional abuses that have arisen in the South of Europe are severely censured by Bishop Bonomelli of Cremona in his work, *Il Culto Religioso, Difetti e Abusi*, Cremona 1905, recently translated into English under the title, *On Religious Worship and Some Defects in Popular Devotions.*

SECTION 2

THE CULT OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

1. Definition of Terms.—Worship or devotion (*cultus*) to some person, idea or thing [1] may be religious or profane, absolute or relative. It always comprises three separate and distinct acts:

a) An act of intellectual assent to the venerability of the person, idea or object which is the object of worship;

b) An act of the will by which the theoretical judgment becomes practical;

c) An external act giving expression to the internal sentiment.[2]

The formal object of every act of religious worship is the supernatural dignity, excellence or perfection of the person, idea or thing worshipped. Hence we may distinguish different kinds of worship according to the various species or degrees of perfection inherent in the persons, ideas or things themselves.

1 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, p. 278.

2 On the distinction between absolute and relative worship, and that between the formal and the material object of religious worship in general, see Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, pp. 279 sq.

The absolute worship we owe to the increate majesty of God and to the Godman Jesus Christ, and which is called latreutic or divine worship (adoration), differs essentially from that due to any creature. When directed to a creature, latreutic adoration (*cultus latriae*) is called idolatry (*idololatria*).

The worship which we owe to specially endowed creatures, such as the angels and saints, is technically termed *dulia*. The highest form of *dulia* is due to the Blessed Virgin Mary, because she transcends all other creatures by her unique dignity as Mother of God. Theologians are wont to call this special worship *hyperdulia*. Some even hold that there is a specific difference between it and the ordinary worship paid to the saints. In making this distinction they do not, of course, lose sight of the essential difference between the hyperdulic devotion rendered to our Lady and the latreutic adoration due to God alone.[3]

2. The Blessed Virgin Mary is Entitled to a Special Kind of Worship Superior to that Paid to the Other Saints.—In demonstrating this proposition we must distinguish between the *quaestio iuris* and the *quaestio facti*.

3 Cfr. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, 2a 2ae, qu. 103, art. 4, ad 2: "*Hyperdulia est potissima species duliae communiter sumptae: maxima enim reverentia debetur homini ex affinitate, quam habet ad Deum.*" (Cfr. De Lugo, *De Myst. Incarn.*, disp. 35, sect. 2.)

a) First as to the *quaestio iuris*. The higher the dignity and holiness of a person, the greater is his or her claim to our respect and veneration. Now, the dignity of the Blessed Virgin, morally considered, is immeasurably high [4] and her sanctity commensurate with the fulness of grace with which God has endowed her.[5] Consequently, she is entitled to a worship which, while essentially below that due to God, exceeds the ordinary *dulia* exhibited to the Saints in precisely the same measure in which, as θεοτόκος, Mary outranks the angels and saints. This is precisely what is called *hyperdulia*.

From the fact that Mary deserves such a high degree of veneration, it may be inferred that devotion to her is a religious duty. It is difficult to conceive how a Catholic could really love Jesus without honoring His mother.[6] By a kind of psychological necessity habitual neglect of Mary leads to contempt of her Divine Son. This truth is clearly exemplified in the history of Protestantism. The Church had good reasons for linking the "Hail Mary" with the "Our Father," for enriching the ecclesiastical calendar with numerous beautiful festivals in honor of Our Lady, and for exhorting the faithful to pray to her often and fervently by reciting the Rosary and other special devotions.[7]

b) The *quaestio facti* offers no greater difficulties than the *quaestio iuris*. Christians have at

4 *V. supra*, pp. 16 sqq.

5 *V. supra*, pp. 24 sqq.

6 Cfr. Newman, *Difficulties of Anglicans*, Vol. II, pp. 82 sqq.

7 Cfr. Benedict XIV, *De Festis D. N. Iesu Christi et B. Mariae Virginis*, Venice 1767.

all times since the institution of the Church rendered to Mary that peculiar kind of worship which is now technically known as *hyperdulia.*

During the first three centuries, it is true, Mary did not occupy such a prominent place in the thoughts and prayers of the faithful. Her glory was overshadowed by that of her Divine Son. We need not wonder at this; for the Godman Himself had first to be generally acknowledged and adored before Mary could come into the worship due to her as His mother.[8]

Towards the end of the sixth century a sect of Arabian women went so far astray as to adore Mary and to offer her cakes, which were consumed at feasts similar to the thesmophoria held in honor of the pagan goddess Demeter.[9] This aberration was condemned by St. Epiphanius, who declared that Mary, though "a select vessel" exalted above all the Saints, is not entitled to divine honors.

Soon after Constantine the Great had led forth the infant Church from the catacombs, devotion to our Lady began to spread. The cities of Nicaea (where the first general council was held) and Byzantium (Constantinople), the new capital of the empire, were officially dedicated to the Blessed Virgin by the Emperor Constantine. His mother St. Helena erected the first churches in

8 "*Sicut gloriam in Filio praecessit humilitas, sic matris humilitatem, quae redundabat a Filio, est subsecuta sublimitas,*" says Abbot Guibert (*De Laude S. Mariae*, c. 2).

9 On this sect, called Collyridians (from κολλύρια, small cakes) cfr. Hergenröther, *Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. I, 4th ed., p. 394, Freiburg 1902; Wernsdorf, *Dissert. de Collyridianorum Secta*, Vitemb. 1745.

honor of Our Lady at Bethlehem and Nazareth. In Rome, Pope Liberius (352-366) built the famous basilica known as Santa Maria Maggiore. The Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (A. D. 431) held its sessions in a temple dedicated to the θεοτόκος. Recent discoveries in the catacombs show that devotion to the Blessed Virgin is as old as the Church. Her image appears at the beginning of the second century in the catacombs of St. Priscilla, where she is represented in a sitting posture with the Divine Infant in her arms, facing the prophet Isaias who carries a manuscript roll in his left hand and points to a star with his right.[10]

READINGS: — St. Thomas, *S. Theol.*, 3a, qu. 25, art. 5.— *Suarez, *De Incarnatione,* disp. 22, sect. 3.— Petavius, *De Incarnatione,* XIV, 8 sqq.— B. Plazza, *Christianorum in Sanctos Sanctorumque Reginam Propensa Devotio,* Palermo 1547.— Abelly, *Sentiments des SS. Pères touchant les Excellences et les Prérogatives de la Très-Sainte Vièrge,* Paris 1674.— *Trombelli, *Mariae Sanctissimae Vita ac Gesta Cultusque illi Adhibitus,* 6 vols., Bologna 1761.—*Haine, *De Hyperdulia,* Louvain 1864.— F. A. von Lehner, *Die Marienverehrung in den ersten Jahrhunderten,* 2nd ed., Stuttgart 1886.— *H. F. J. Liell, *Die Darstellungen der allerseligsten Jungfrau und Gottesgebärerin Maria auf den Kunstdenkmälern in den Katakomben,* Freiburg 1887.— Jos. Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms,* 2 vols., Freiburg 1903.— S. Beissel, S. J., *Die Verehrung unserer lieben Frau in Deutschland während des Mittelalters,* Freiburg 1896.— IDEM, *Geschichte der Verehrung Mariens in Deutschland bis zum Ende des Mittelal-*

10 Cfr. C. M. Kaufmann, *Handbuch der christlichen Archäologie,* pp. 361 sq., Paderborn 1905; Scaglia-Nagengast, *The Catacombs of St. Callistus,* pp. 67 sq., Rome 1911; Shahan, *The Blessed Virgin in the Catacombs,* Baltimore 1892.

ters, Freiburg 1909.— IDEM, *Geschichte der Verehrung Marias im* 16. *und* 17. *Jahrhundert,* Freiburg 1910.—*B. Bartman, *Christus ein Gegner des Marienkultus?* Freiburg 1909.— Hergenröther-Phelan, *A History of the Devotion to the Blessed Virgin in the First Ten Centuries.* St. Louis 1880.—J. H. Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine,* 12th ed., pp. 135 sqq., 410 sqq., London 1903.— IDEM, "A Letter Addressed to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., on Occasion of His Eirenicon of 1864," in *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans Considered,* Vol. II, pp. 1–170, new ed., London 1907.— H. G. Ganss, *Mariolatry: New Phases of an Old Fallacy,* Notre Dame, Ind., 1897.— Chs. F. McGinnis, *The Communion of Saints,* pp. 1 sqq., 154 sqq., St. Louis 1912.— H. J. Coleridge, S. J., "English Devotion to Our Blessed Lady in the Olden Time," in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review,* Vol. IV, No. 15 (July 1879).— Th. E. Bridgett, C. SS. R., *Our Lady's Dowry,* London 1875.—B. Rohner, O. S. B., *Veneration of the Blessed Virgin. Her Feasts, Prayers, Religious Orders, and Sodalities. Adapted by Rev. Richard Brennan,* New York 1898, new impression, *ibid.,* 1913.—S. Beissel, S. J., *Wallfahrten zu Unserer Lieben Frau in Legende und Geschichte,* Freiburg 1913.

Ultima in mortis hora
Filium pro nobis ora,
Bonam mortem impetra,
Virgo, Mater, Domina.

APPENDIX

ON THE WORSHIP OF THE SAINTS RELICS, AND IMAGES

The worship due to the Blessed Virgin Mary (*hyperdulia*), to be rightly understood, must be considered in contradistinction to the worship which we owe to the other Saints of God (*dulia*). This justifies the addition to Mariology of an appendix treating of the Worship of the Saints and the kindred subject of the Veneration of Relics and Images.

CHAPTER I

THE WORSHIP OF THE SAINTS

The first and most important point to be noted in regard to the Catholic dogma of the worship of the Saints is that both *dulia, i. e.,* the worship we render to the Saints in general, and *hyperdulia, i. e.,* that specific worship which we give to the Blessed Virgin in particular, differ formally and essentially from the divine worship due to Almighty God (*latria*).

The difference between *dulia* (including *hyperdulia*) and *latria* is as vast as the gulf that separates the creature from its Creator. The relation between *dulia* and *latria,* like that between creature and Creator, is purely analogical.[1] Their formal objects are separate and distinct. The formal object of *latria* is the *virtus religionis;* that of *dulia,* the *virtus observantiae.*[2] This distinction is sufficient to disprove the odious charge, sometimes made against Catholics, that they *adore* the Virgin Mary and the Saints. Of its very

1 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *God: His Knowability, Essence, and Attributes,* pp. 165 sqq.

2 Cfr. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.,* 2a 2ae, qu. 102 sq.

nature the worship we give to the Saints has nothing in common with idolatry.[3]

Dulia takes the form either of veneration or invocation. Veneration (*veneratio*) is respect and reverence shown to the Saints for their own sake. Invocation (*invocatio*) is calling upon them for help in order to advance our own welfare.

It is to be noted, however, that invocation logically includes, or at least presupposes, a certain respect and reverence for the person to whom it is directed, and consequently implies veneration.

Honor and veneration are by no means synonymous terms and should not be employed interchangeably. God honors His Saints, but He does not venerate them. Veneration logically connotes an acknowledgment of the superior excellence of, and humble submission to, the person to whom it is exhibited. Hence the term *dulia,* from δουλεία, *i. e.,* service.

The *cultus duliae* which we exhibit to the person of a Saint is absolute, in contradistinction to the merely relative worship which we give to holy relics and images. Another essential difference is that relics and images, being inanimate objects, may be venerated but not invoked. "Honor or reverence," says St. Thomas of Aquin, "is due solely to rational creatures; those devoid of reason can be honored or reverenced only with respect to some rational nature." [4]

3 Cfr. H. G. Ganss, *Mariolatry: New Phases of an Old Fallacy,* Notre Dame, Ind., 1897.

4 *Summa Theol.,* 3a, qu. 25, art. 4: "*Honor seu reverentia non debetur nisi rationali creaturae: crea-*

It is licit and useful to venerate and invoke the Saints and to honor their relics. This is one of the most ancient dogmas of the Christian Church. To ridicule and condemn the veneration of the Saints and their relics, therefore, would be tantamount to accusing the Primitive Church of idolatry.

The Catholic teaching with regard to the worship of the Saints is succinctly set forth in the subjoined thesis.

Thesis: The Saints in Heaven are entitled to the cultus duliae, and we may, with profit to ourselves, beg them to intercede for us with God.

This thesis embodies two distinct articles of faith.

Proof of the First Part. The Council of Trent defines: "The honor which is given them [the images] is referred to the originals which they represent; in such wise that, by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads, or kneel, we adore Christ and venerate His Saints, whose likeness they bear."[5] If it is permitted to venerate the images of the Saints, then, *a fortiori,* it must be permitted to venerate the Saints themselves.

turae autem insensibili non debetur honor vel reverentia nisi ratione rationalis creaturae."

[5] *"Honos, qui eis exhibetur, refertur ad prototypa, quae illae* [*scil. imagines*] *repraesentant, ita ut per imagines, quas osculamur et coram quibus caput aperimus et procumbimus, Christum adoremus et Sanctos, quorum illae similitudinem gerunt, veneremur."* (Sess. XXV, *De Invocatione et Veneratione et Reliquiis Sanctorum,* etc. Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 986.)

a) It is true that Sacred Scripture, while it praises and approves the cultus of the angels,[6] says nothing about the veneration of the Saints. But what it says of the angels may safely be applied to the Saints in Heaven. The Bible even tells us of religious veneration rendered to saintly persons on earth.[7]

In warning the Colossians against the "religion of angels," [8] St. Paul had in mind the worship of æons as practiced by certain Jews and Gnostics.[9]

A real difficulty against our thesis seems to arise from Apoc. XIX, 10, where the angel appearing to St. John declines the adoration offered to him. "And I fell down before his feet to adore him. And he saith to me: See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant,[10] and of thy brethren, who have the testimony of Jesus. Adore God." Rightly interpreted, however, this passage confirms rather than disproves the licitness of the veneration given to the angels. For when St. John "fell down before his feet to adore" the angel, he either believed that Christ Himself stood before him, and in that case it was the angel's duty to disabuse him of his error and to refuse the adoration offered; or he was aware that the apparition was an angel, and then he believed it to be licit and proper to "fall down before his feet and adore him," in which case *adorare* is evidently used in the sense of *venerari*. But why did the Angel decline the worship offered

6 Cfr. Ex. XXIII, 20 sqq.; Jos. V, 13 sqq.; Dan. VIII, 15 sqq.; X, 4 sqq.; Tob. XII; cfr. Matth. XVIII, 10, etc.

7 *E. g.*, to Elias (3 Kings XVIII, 37 sqq.) and Eliseus (4 Kings II, 15; IV, 37).

8 Col. II, 18.

9 Cfr. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, III, 28.

10 *Conservus*, *σύνδουλος*.

to him? He gives the reason himself. Because St. John, being an Apostle of Christ, was his "fellow servant," the equal, as a divine messenger, of the angels, and under no obligation to humiliate himself before them (*dulia* = *servitus*).

Paul and Barnabas restrained the people of Lystra from honoring them, because the worship offered was idolatrous. Acts XIV, 10 sqq.: "And when the multitudes had seen what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice in the Lycaonian tongue, saying: The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men; and they called Barnabas Jupiter: but Paul, Mercury, because he was chief speaker. The priest also of Jupiter that was before the city, bringing oxen and garlands before the gate, would have offered sacrifice with the people."

b) Devotion to the angels, especially the guardian angels, seems to be older than worship of the Saints. But this is due entirely to historic conditions. The infant Church had first to beget Saints before she could honor them. It is easy to see, too, why the martyrs were the first Saints to be venerated. The early Christians regarded martyrdom as the climax of Christian virtue. To lay down one's life for the faith was to obtain forgiveness of all sins, immediate entrance to Heaven, and the privilege of being forever identified with the fortunes of the Church on earth. The graves of the martyrs in course of time became altars, and before long the veneration of other Saints who were not martyrs, espe-

cially the Blessed Virgin Mary, grew more popular.[11]

Tertullian testifies that in his day the memory of the martyrs was celebrated every year.[12] St. Cyprian says: "We celebrate the sufferings of the martyrs and their days by annual commemorations."[13] St. Augustine vigorously defends the ancient Christian practice of venerating the martyrs. "The Christian populace," he says in his treatise against Faustus the Manichæan, "celebrates the memory of the martyrs with religious solemnity, . . . but we rear altars not to any martyr, but to the God of martyrs Himself, though in memory of the martyrs. For what priest, standing before the altar where their sacred bodies lie, has ever said: We offer [sacrifice] to thee, O Peter, or Paul, or Cyprian? What is offered, is offered to God, who has crowned the martyrs, near the memorial places of those whom He has crowned, that a stronger affection may arise from the places themselves to intensify our love both for those whom we can imitate and for Him by whose help we are able to imitate them. We venerate the martyrs, therefore, with that worship of love and association by which the Saints of God are venerated in this life, . . . all the more devoutly, because they have securely won their battles. . . . But we worship God alone by that cult which in Greek is called λατρεία, a term for which there is no equivalent in Latin, as it means a certain servitude which in its proper sense is due only to the Divinity."[14]

11 Cfr. J. P. Kirsch, *The Doctrine of the Communion of Saints in the Ancient Church*, pp. 18 sqq., 136 sqq., 212 sqq., London 1911; Fr. X. Kraus, *Roma Sotteranea*, pp. 68 sqq., 460 sqq., 547 sqq., Freiburg 1901.

12 *De Corona*, c. 3: "*Oblationes pro natalibus annuâ die facimus.*"

13 *Ep.*, 39, 3, ed. Härtel, II, 583: "*Martyrum passiones et dies anniversariâ commemoratione celebramus.*"

14 *Contra Faustum Manich.*, XX,

A solid proof for the reasonableness and utility of the pious practice of venerating the Saints is found in the festivals and liturgies, the songs and hymns, the homilies and sermons dedicated to them, and the churches and chapels erected in their honor from the earliest times both in the East and in the West.

Proof of the Second Part. The Council of Trent declares the invocation of the Saints to be a "good and useful" practice: "It is good and useful to invoke them supplicatingly and to take refuge to their prayers, power, and help to obtain benefits from God through His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who is the sole Redeemer and Saviour." [15]

An early opponent of this doctrine was Vigilantius, a priest in Gaul (A. D. 402), who claimed that to invoke the Saints was a pagan custom. His objections were refuted by St. Jerome. In modern times the Protestant denial of the dogma prompted the Tridentine Council to

21: "*Populus Christianus memorias martyrum religiosâ solemnitate concelebrat, . . . ita tamen ut nulli martyrum, sed ipsi Deo martyrum, quamvis in memoriis martyrum, constituamus altaria. Quis enim antistitum in locis sanctorum corporum assistens altari aliquando dixit: Offerimus tibi, Petre aut Paule aut Cypriane? Sed quod offertur, offertur Deo, qui martyres coronavit, apud memorias eorum, quos coronavit, ut ex ipsorum locorum admonitione maior affectus exsurgat ad acuendam caritatem et in illos, quos imitari possumus, et in illum, quo adiuvante possumus. Colimus ergo martyres eo cultu dilectionis et societatis, quo et in hac vita coluntur sancti homines Dei, . . . sed illos tanto devotius, quanto securius post certamina superata. . . . At illo cultu, qui graece λατρεία dicitur — latine uno verbo dici non potest, quum sit quaedam proprie divinitati debita servitus — nec colimus nec colendum docemus nisi unum Deum.*"

15 "*Bonum atque utile esse suppliciter eos invocare et ob beneficia impetranda a Deo per Filium eius Iesum Christum D. N., qui solus Redemptor et Salvator est, ad eorum orationes, opem auxiliumque confugere.*" (Sess. XXV. Cfr. Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 984.)

define it formally as follows: "Those are guilty of impiety who deny that the Saints who enjoy eternal felicity in Heaven, are to be invoked, or who assert either that they do not pray for men or that to invoke them in order that they may pray for us, even individually, is idolatry; or that it is against the Word of God and contrary to the honor of Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and men, or that it is foolish to pray by word of mouth or mentally to those who reign in Heaven." [16]

a) The licitness of the invocation of the angels and Saints can be both directly and indirectly proved from Holy Scripture.

α) The indirect argument runs as follows: According to Sacred Scripture God frequently heeded the intercession of just and holy men while they were still living on earth. Now, the intercession of the angels and Saints, who have reached their final goal, is more powerful and effective than that of men, no matter how holy, who are still in danger of committing sin. If these can be effectively asked for their intercession, the same must *a fortiori* be true of the angels and Saints, who are friends of God in a

16 "*Illos vero, qui negant, Sanctos aeternâ felicitate in coelo fruentes invocandos esse, aut qui asserunt, vel illos pro hominibus non orare vel eorum, ut pro nobis etiam singulis orent, invocationem esse idololatriam, vel pugnare cum Verbo Dei adversarique honori unius mediatoris Dei et hominum Iesu Christi, vel stultum esse in coelo regnantibus voce vel mente supplicare, impie sentire.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart l. c.) For a refutation of these Protestant objections see the *Catechismus Romanus,* P. III, cap. 2, n. 10–14 (Donovan's English translation, *Catechism of the Council of Trent,* Dublin 1908, pp. 318 sqq.).

higher sense because of their righteousness and glory.

The major premise of this syllogism can be proved by innumerable examples. Thus, for instance, Abraham prayed for Sodom, and God heard him.[17] Moses prayed for his people, and the Lord listened to his supplication.[18] Job interceded for his friends, and Yahweh blessed them.[19] St. Paul prayed for two hundred threescore and sixteen who were in danger of shipwreck, and "every soul got safe to land." [20]

The minor premise is thus established by St. Jerome against Vigilantius: "If the Apostles and martyrs, while yet in the body, and in need of being solicitous for themselves, were able to pray for others, how much more [may they pray for others now] after having obtained their crown, won the victory and triumphed? One man, Moses, besought God for forgiveness for six hundred armed men; and Stephen, the follower of his Master and the first martyr in Christ, prayed for his persecutors. Will they be less powerful now that they are with Christ? The Apostle Paul says that he saved two hundred and seventy-six souls in the boat. Can we assume that after his death, when he began to be with Christ, his mouth was sealed and he was unable to utter a word in behalf of those who throughout the world accepted his Gospel?" [21]

17 Gen. XVIII, 23 sqq.

18 Ex. XXXII, 11.

19 Job XLII, 8.

20 Acts XXVII, 34 sqq.

21 *Contra Vigilant.*, n. 6: "*Si Apostoli et martyres adhuc in corpore constituti possunt orare pro ceteris, quando pro se adhuc debent esse solliciti, quanto magis post coronas, victorias et triumphos? Unus homo Moyses sexcentis millibus armatorum impetrat a Deo veniam; et Stephanus, imitator Domini sui et primus martyr in Christo, pro persecutoribus veniam deprecatur. Et postquam cum Christo esse coeperunt, minus valebunt? Paulus Apostolus ducentas septuaginta sex sibi dicit in navi animas condonatas, et postquam resolutus esse coeperit cum Christo, tunc ora clausurus est et pro his, qui in toto orbe ad suum*

It should not be objected that the Saints have no knowledge of earthly affairs; for our Divine Saviour Himself says: "There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance." [22]

β) The direct argument is based upon those passages of Sacred Scripture in which men are described as successfully invoking the angels and saints.

Thus the Archangel Raphael said to the saintly Tobias: "When thou didst pray with tears, . . . I offered thy prayer to the Lord." [23] St. John beheld "golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints." "And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel." [24] Judas Machabæus, in "a dream worthy to be believed, whereby he rejoiced them all," saw the high priest Onias and the prophet Jeremias, (both of whom were dead), "pray for all the people of the Jews" Cfr. 2 Mach. XV, 12 sqq.: "Onias, who had been high priest, a good and virtuous man, . . . holding up his hands, prayed for all the people of the Jews. And after this there appeared also another man, admirable for age and glory, and environed with great beauty and majesty. Then Onias answering said: This is a lover of his brethren and of the people of Israel: this is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city, Jeremias the prophet of God." If the Angels and Saints can help us by their intercession, we certainly do well to invoke them in our manifold needs.

evangelium crediderunt, mutire non poterit?"

22 Luke XV, 10.

23 Tob. XII, 12.

24 Apoc. V, 8; VIII, 4.

b) We can quote no explicit confirmation of our thesis from Tradition prior to the year 180. But Origen, who lived towards the close of the second century, and St. Hippolytus (about 222), teach that it is licit and profitable to invoke the blessed martyrs on behalf of the living and the dead. Numerous sepulchral inscriptions show that it was customary at a very early date to pray to the martyrs for their intercession, and likewise to Saints who were not martyrs.[25] We find the dogma fully developed, both in theory and practice, as early as the fourth century.

St. Ambrose says: "The Angels must be honored, . . . the martyrs must be implored, . . . let us not be ashamed to employ them as intercessors in our infirmity."[26] St. Chrysostom, speaking of the martyrs, says: "Not only on this their festival day, but on other days as well, let us cleave to and invoke them, and pray that they be our protectors, for they enjoy great confidence during this life and after death, yea, much more after death. For they bear the signs of Christ's wounds, and when they exhibit these, they can persuade their King to do anything."[27] St. Chrysostom elsewhere admonishes his hearers to work out their own salvation, because we "need no intercessors with God;" but in saying this he does not mean to deny the propriety and effectiveness of invoking the Saints, but merely wishes

25 For more detailed information on this point see J. P. Kirsch, *Die Akklamationen und Gebete der altchristlichen Grabschriften*, Köln 1897.

26 *De Vid.*, c. 9, n. 55: "*Observandi sunt angeli. . . . martyres obsecrandi. . . . non erubescamus eos intercessores nostrae infirmitatis adhibere.*"

27 *Hom. de SS. Beren. et Prosdoce*, n. 7.

to strengthen the confidence of Christians in their own powers, as he himself explains:[28] "If we do our share, the intercession of the Saints will profit us greatly; but if we are careless and stake our hope of salvation entirely on that intercession, it will not avail us much; not as if the Saints possessed less power, but because we are our own betrayers on account of our indolence."[29]

c) The strong faith which devout Catholics repose in the special power of certain Saints to aid them in particular necessities, is based on St. Paul's teaching as to the diverse functions proper to the different members of Christ's mystical body.

Cfr. 1 Cor. XII, 18: "Now God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him." This teaching, which was echoed by St. Augustine,[30] led to the selection of special patron Saints for different cities, villages, churches, and chapels, the invocation of individual patrons, and of this or that particular Saint for certain special favors. St. Thomas[31] recommends it as a safe rule not to invoke the greater Saints exclusively, but to appeal now and then to the "*sancti minores.*" He gives five distinct reasons for this: (1) Many Christians harbor greater affection for some particular Saint;

28 Chrysost., *Hom. in Gen.*, 44, n. 1.

29 Additional quotations from the Fathers can be found in Bellarmine, *De Beat. et Canon. Sanct.*, I, 19. The liturgical argument is well developed by Tepe, *Instit. Theol.*, Vol. III, p. 727, Paris 1896; cfr. also Kellner, *Heortology*, English edition, pp. 203 sqq., London 1908.

30 *Ep.*, 78, 3 (Migne, *P. L.*, XXXIII, 269): "*Sicut enim, dicit Apostolus* (1 Cor. XII, 30), *non omnes Sancti habent dona curationum, . . . ita nec in omnibus memoriis Sanctorum ista fieri voluit ille, qui dividit propria unicuique prout vult.*"

31 *Suppl.*, qu. 72, art. 2, ad 2.

(2) There is need of variety, lest we grow weary in praying; (3) It is probable that in certain matters the intercession of some Saints is more powerful than that of others; (4) It is meet that all who have a claim to honor should be honored; and (5) The combined intercession of several Saints is of greater efficacy than that of one alone.

Readings:—*Bellarmine, *De Cultu Sanctorum.*—Idem, *De Beatificatione et Canonizatione Sanctorum.*—De Lugo, *De Mysterio Incarnationis,* disp. 35, sect. 1.—Benedict XIV, *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et Canonizatione,* Venice 1767.—*Trombelli, *De Cultu Sanctorum,* 6 vols., Bologna 1740 sqq.—L. Clarus, *Verehrung der Heiligen,* Trier 1870.—Le Blant, *Les Actes des Martyrs,* Paris 1882.—L. Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien,* Paris 1889. (*Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution, translated by M. L. McClure,* London 1903)—*J. P. Kirsch, *Die Lehre von der Gemeinschaft der Heiligen im christlichen Altertum,* Mainz 1900. (*The Doctrine of the Communion of Saints in the Ancient Church. A Study in the History of Dogma, translated by John R. M'Kee,* London 1911).—E. Lucius (Prot.), *Die Anfänge des Heiligenkultus,* Tübingen 1904.—Chs. F. McGinnis, *The Communion of Saints,* St. Louis 1912.

CHAPTER II

THE WORSHIP OF RELICS

By (holy) relics we understand: (1) The bodies of saintly persons or any of their integrant parts, such as limbs, ashes, bones, etc.; (2) Objects that have come in physical contact with living Saints and are thereby sanctified (for instance, the instruments wherewith a martyr has been tortured, the chains by which he was bound, the clothes he wore, objects he used). With regard to the last-mentioned class, however, we must make a limitation. Those objects only should be treated as holy relics the veneration of which redounds to a Saint's honor. Whatever is apt to excite ridicule or disrespect must be excluded from worship.

Relics are merely the material object of worship. The formal object, *i. e.*, the reason why they are venerated, is found not in the relics themselves but in the person to whom they belonged. In other words, the respect and veneration which we show to a Saint's relics are directed towards the Saint himself. For this reason the worship of relics is technically termed *cultus duliae relativus.*

That there have been abuses in connexion with the veneration of relics can, unfortunately, not be denied. It belongs to ecclesiastical authority to remedy such abuses, above all by forbidding the veneration of spurious or unbecoming relics, wherever it has crept in. When such veneration is due to ignorance or credulity, or otherwise to good faith, though the harm is not as a rule serious, because the worship shown to spurious relics is really given to the Saint to whom they are believed to belong.

Thesis: The veneration of relics is licit and useful.

This thesis embodies an article of faith.

Proof. The Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicæa, A. D. 787) condemned "those who dare to reject any one of the things which are entrusted to the Church,—the Gospel, or the sign of the cross, or any pictorial representation, or the holy relics of a martyr."[1] The Council of Trent enjoins bishops and pastors to instruct their flocks that "the holy bodies of saintly martyrs and others now living with Christ—which bodies were the living members of Christ and the temple of the Holy Ghost, and which are by Him to be raised unto eternal life and glorified—are to be venerated by the faithful, for through these [bodies] many benefits are bestowed by God on men; so that they who affirm that veneration and honor are not due to the relics of Saints, or

1 "*. . . qui audent. . . . proiicere . . . sive evangelium sive figuram crucis sive imaginalem picturam sive sanctas reliquias martyris.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 304.)

that these and other sacred monuments are uselessly honored by the faithful, . . . are wholly to be condemned, as the Church has already long since condemned and now also condemns them." [2]

This dogmatic definition gives a succinct explanation of the reasons underlying the veneration of relics as practiced in the Catholic Church.

It may be well to add that the Church has always set her face against abuses in connexion with the exposition and translation of relics. Witness, *e. g.*, the sixty-second chapter of the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council, "*De Reliquiis Sanctorum.*" [3]

a) The practice of venerating the relics of saintly persons can be traced in the Old Testament. Cfr. Ex. XIII, 19: "And Moses took Joseph's bones with him: because he had adjured the children of Israel, saying: God shall visit you, carry out my bones from hence with you." [4] 4 Kings XIII, 21: "Some that were burying a man, saw the rovers, and cast the body into the sepulchre of Eliseus. And when it had touched the bones of Eliseus, the man came to life and stood upon his feet."

2 Sess. XXV (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 985): "*Sanctorum quoque martyrum et aliorum cum Christo viventium sancta corpora, quae viva membra fuerunt Christi et templum Spiritus Sancti ab ipso ad aeternam vitam suscitanda et glorificanda, a fidelibus veneranda esse, per quae multa beneficia a Deo hominibus praestantur: ita ut affirmantes Sanctorum reliquiis venerationem atque honorem non deberi vel eas aliaque sacra monumenta a fidelibus inutiliter honorari. . . . omnino damnandos esse, prout iampridem eos damnavit et nunc etiam damnat Ecclesia.*"

3 Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 440.

4 Cfr. Ecclus. XLIX, 18.

The New Testament in numerous passages illustrates the miraculous effects of relics. We will quote but a few: "And behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him [Jesus], and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good cheer, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour."[5]

The first Christians had such great confidence in St. Peter that they "brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities."[6] By the hand of St. Paul "God wrought . . . more than common miracles, so that even there were brought from his body to the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them."[7]

Why, then, did our Lord blame the Pharisees for honoring and adorning the graves of the prophets? Matth. XXIII, 29: "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, that build the sepulchres of the prophets, and adorn the monuments of the just. . . ." The context shows that

5 Matth. IX, 20 sqq. 6 Acts V, 15. 7 Acts XIX, 11 sq.

He did not censure the act itself, but merely the hypocritical motives by which it was inspired. For the Pharisees, like their fathers, persecuted God's prophets and crucified the greatest one among them. "By building sepulchres to the prophets," says St. Ambrose, "they condemned the deeds of their fathers; but the condemnation fell back upon themselves, because they imitated the crimes of their fathers. . . . Hence it was not the building of sepulchres but the imitation of their fathers that was reckoned a crime." [8]

b) The worship of holy relics is an ancient practice in the Church.

Thus we read in the Acts of St. Polycarp (composed about A. D. 156): "We adore Him [Christ], because He is the Son of God, but the martyrs we love as disciples and imitators of the Lord. . . . Then we buried in a becoming place his [St. Polycarp's] remains, which are more precious to us than the costliest diamonds, and which we esteem more highly than gold. The Lord will grant us to assemble there as often as possible in gladness and joy, and to commemorate the birthday of his [Polycarp's] martyrdom, for the twofold purpose of reminding us of those who have already gained the palm of victory, and to exercise and train those who are yet to enter the conflict." [9]

8 *In Luc.*, VII, n. 106: "*Aedificando sepulchra prophetarum patrum suorum facta damnabant, aemulando autem paterna scelera in seipsos sententiam retorquebant. . . . Non igitur aedificatio, sed aemulatio loco criminis aestimatur.*"

9 *Martyrium S. Polycarpi*, c. 17, ed. Funk, Vol. I, 301. For many other similar instances see Th. Ruinart, *Acta Primorum Martyrum Sincera et Selecta*, 2d ed., Amsterdam 1713.

The Fathers regard the numerous miracles wrought through the bodies of holy martyrs as so many arguments in support of the dogma under consideration. St. Ambrose relates how a blind man was restored to sight when the newly found bodies of SS. Gervasius and Protasius were taken to the basilica, and adds: "You know, nay you have seen with your own eyes, how many were delivered from demons, and a great number were cured of diseases when they touched the garments of the Saints; how there was a repetition of the miracles of the early days when, in consequence of the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, abundant grace was showered down upon the earth."[10] St. Augustine also tells of a number of miracles wrought in connection with holy relics.[11]

10 *Ep.*, 22, n. 9 (Migne, *P. L.*, XVI, 1022 sq.): "*Cognovistis, imo vidistis ipsi multos a daemoniis purgatos, plurimos etiam, ubi vestem sanctorum manibus contigerunt, iis quibus laborabant debilitatibus absolutos, reparata vetusti temporis miracula, quo se per adventum Domini Iesu gratia terris maior infuderat.*"

11 *Confessiones*, IX, 7; *De Civ. Dei*, XXII, 8. St. Ambrose severely rebukes the Arians, who denied that miracles were wrought through relics. "*Et Ariani dicunt: Non sunt isti martyres nec torquere diabolum possunt nec aliquem liberare. . . . Negant caecum illuminatum, sed ille non negat se sanatum. Ille dicit: Video, qui non videbam. Ille dicit: Caecus esse desivi, et probat facto. Isti beneficium negant, qui factum negare non possunt. Notus homo publicis, quum valeret, mancipatus obsequiis, Severus nomine, lanius ministerio.*" (*Ep.*, 22, n. 16 sq.) St. Jerome says in his treatise *Contra Vigilantium* (n. 5): "*Dolet martyrum reliquias pretioso operiri velamine et non vel pannis vel cilicio colligari vel proiici in sterquilinum, ut solus Vigilantius ebrius et dormiens adoretur. Ergo sacrilegi sumus, quando Apostolorum basilicas ingredimur? Sacrilegus fuit Constantius Imperator I., qui sanctas reliquias Andreae, Lucae et Timothei transtulit Constantinopolim, apud quas daemones rugiunt?*" Other Patristic texts in Petavius, *De Incarn.*, XIV, 13 and Thomassin, *De Incarn.*, XII, 4.— The Patristic evidence is so overwhelming that even Harnack is constrained to confess: "Most offensive was the worship of relics. It flourished to its greatest extent as early as the fourth century and no Church doctor of repute restricted it. All of them rather, even the Cappadocians, countenanced it. The numerous miracles which were wrought by bones and relics seemed to confirm their worship. The Church, therefore, would not give up the practice, although a violent attack was

c) This traditional practice explains the special veneration which Catholics have always entertained for what were believed to be particles of the true Cross.

α) St. Cyril of Jerusalem says: "This holy wood of the Cross is still to be seen among us; and through the agency of those who piously took home particles thereof, it has filled the whole earth."[13] St. Chrysostom tells how men and women used to wear particles of the Cross in golden lockets on their necks.[14]

The faithful were also wont to venerate the lance, the nails, the pillar at which our Lord was scourged, the linen in which His sacred body was wrapped, His tunic, the crib in which He was supposed to have lain as an infant, the holy sepulchre, etc. Some of these relics have not stood the test of archæological criticism, but this proves nothing against the thesis we are sustaining.[15] No doubt, after the critics have done their work, the Church will not hesitate, with due regard to the sentiments of the faithful, to withdraw all spurious relics from public veneration and thus place the trustful devotion of her children upon a secure historical basis.[16]

β) There is another early Christian practice which, to be properly understood, must be judged in the light of

made upon it by a few cultured heathens and besides by the Manichæans." (*Hist. of Dogm.*, Engl. tr., Vol. IV, p. 313.)

13 *Catech.*, 10, n. 10. St. Cyril and a few other Patristic and medieval writers apparently believed that there was some virtue inherent in relics. On this point see H. Thurston in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XII, p. 735.

14 Migne, *P. G.*, XLVIII, 826.

15 Cfr. St. John Damascene, *De Fide Orth.*, IV, 11.

16 Cfr. Rohault de Fleury, *Mémoire sur les Instruments de la Passion*, Paris 1870; L. de Combes, *The Finding of the Cross*, pp. 167 sqq., London 1907. Regarding certain alleged relics of the Precious Blood of our Divine Saviour see Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, pp. 170 sqq.

the veneration exhibited to holy relics. It is the custom of making pilgrimages to the tombs of the Saints, especially Apostles and martyrs. Bishop Jonas of Orleans, who died about 840, writes: "We are taught that those are not to be censured nor to be called foolish, who, for the purpose of increasing their devotion, or seeking the intercession of the Apostles, visit their burial places, because we believe that not only is love for the service of God increased by this practice, but men will be rewarded for the labors and journeys which they undertake for the love of God. Besides, it is peculiar to the human mind to be more forcibly impressed by things seen than by things heard." [17] How closely the exterior manifestations of devotion in such holy places resembled those still witnessed at the present time appears from a statement made by Theodoret of Cyrus (died about 458). He says that after being cured of various diseases, pious pilgrims were wont to leave symbolic votive offerings at the shrines where they had found relief. "That those who pray devoutly receive the fruitage of their vows," he says, "is proved by the presents which they leave in commemoration of their cure. Some hang up gold or silver representations of eyes, others of feet, others of hands, etc." [18] In making pilgrimages, however, Catholics will do well to heed the prudent

17 *De Cultu Imag.*, l. 3: "*Docemur, non improbandos nec more tuo* [Jonas is arguing against Bishop Claudius of Turin, who opposed the veneration of images] *stultos insipientesque appellandos esse eos, qui devotionis augmentandae gratia intercessionisque per suffragia quaerendae Apostolorum adeunt limina, quia credimus, quod per haec non solummodo eorum mentibus adolescat amor circa divini cultus servitutem, sed etiam laboris sui atque itineris, quae subire volunt intentione divini amoris, mercede donentur. Sane est etiam proprium humanae menti, non adeo compungi ex auditis, sicut ex visis.*"

18 *De Cur. Affect. Graec.*, l. 8.

admonition of Thomas à Kempis:[19] "They who go on many pilgrimages seldom become holy."[20]

19 *De Imit. Christi,* I, 23.

20 On the subject of pilgrimages see J. Marx, *Das Wallfahren in der katholischen Kirche, historisch-kritisch dargestellt,* Trier 1842.

CHAPTER III

THE WORSHIP OF IMAGES

An image (*imago*, εἰκών) is a representation or likeness of any person, sculptured, drawn, painted or otherwise made perceptible to the sight. The person represented is known as the "prototype," while the image itself is called "ectype." The veneration of holy images, like that of relics, is a purely relative worship (*cultus relativus*), as its formal object consists in the sanctity of the person whom it represents, not in the material image itself. The Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicæa (A. D. 787) says: "The honor given to an image passes to the prototype thereof, and he who worships an image, worships in the image the person of him whom it represents." [1]

Images of God and the Saints differ *toto coelo* from idols. An idol (*simulacrum*, εἴδωλον) is the representation of a false god, while a holy image in the Christian sense is the pictorial representation of the true God or of a genuine Saint. A Saint is venerated but not adored. Hence it is a rude and gratuitous insult to charge Catholics with being idolaters because they venerate the images

[1] "*Imaginis enim honor ad primitivum* (πρωτότυπον) *transit, et qui adorat* [*i. e., colit*] *imaginem, adorat in eo depicti subsistentiam* (ὑπόστασιν)." (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 302.)

of Saints. "How are we idolaters," demanded the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, "who honor and worship the bones, the ashes, the garments, and the tombs of the martyrs precisely for the reason that they refused to sacrifice to idols?"[2]

Thesis I: Holy images must not be worshipped as such.

This is *de fide.*

Proof. The Seventh Ecumenical Council (A. D. 787) says: "The more frequently they [the Saints] are beheld by means of images, the more keenly are those who view them moved to remember and desire their originals, to kiss them and to pay them the tribute of worship, not, however, divine worship, which according to our faith is due solely to the Divine Nature."[3]

One of the Fathers of this council, Bishop Constantius of Constantia (a city on the island of Cyprus), said in a public confession of faith: "I, though unworthy, assent to these truths . . . accepting and embracing with honor the holy and venerable images. Adoration, which consists in

2 "*Quomodo sumus idololatrae, qui et ipsa ossa et cinerem et pannos et sanguinem et tumulum martyrum ideo honoramus et adoramus* [*i. e., colimus*], *quia idolis non sacrificaverunt?*" (*Acta Conc. Ecum. VII.,* 4.)

3 "*Quanto frequentius per imaginalem formationem videntur, tanto qui has* [*imagines*] *contemplantur, alacrius eriguntur ad primitivorum* (*πρωτοτύπων*) *earum memoriam et desiderium, ad osculum et ad honorariam his adorationem* (*προσκύνησιν*) *tribuendam, non tamen ad veram latriam, quae secundum fidem est quaeque solam divinam naturam decet, impertiendam* (*οὐ μὴν τὴν κατὰ πίστιν ἡμῶν ἀληθινὴν λατρείαν, ἣ πρέπει μόνῃ τῇ θείᾳ φύσει*)." (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 302.)

latria, i. e., the worship due to God, I render only to the supersubstantial and life-giving Trinity. And I exclude from the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church all those who do not hold and proclaim this doctrine, and pronounce anathema upon them." [4] This perfectly orthodox confession was later circulated among the Franks in a garbled translation, thus: "I accept and embrace with honor the holy and venerable images according to the worship of adoration which I give to the consubstantial and life-giving Trinity, and I exclude from the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, etc." [5] This mistranslation led a synod held at Frankfort in 794 to assume a hostile attitude towards the Council of Nicæa.[6] Pope Hadrian the First cleared up the misunderstanding, and the Second Council of Nicæa was subsequently recognized as ecumenical by the Western Church.[7]

4 "*Ego indignus his consentio . . . suscipiens et amplectens honorabiliter sanctas et venerabiles imagines; atque adorationem, quae per latriam, i. e., Deo debitam servitutem efficitur, soli supersubstantiali et vivificae Trinitati impendo. Et qui ita non sapiunt neque praedicant, a sancta catholica et apostolica Ecclesia segrego et anathemati subiicio.*" (Hardouin, *Conc.*, t. IV, p. 151.)

5 "*Suscipio et amplector honorabiliter sanctas et venerandas imagines secundum servitium adorationis, quod consubstantiali et vivificatrici Trinitati emitto, et qui sic non sentiunt, etc.*" (Migne, *P. L.*, XCVIII, 1148.)

6 Can. 2: "*Allata est in medium quaestio de nova Graecorum synodo, quam de adorandis imaginibus Constantinopoli fecerunt, in qua scriptum habebatur, ut qui imaginibus sanctorum ita ut deificae Trinitati servitium aut adorationem non impenderent, anathemate iudicarentur. Qui supra SS. Patres nostri omnimodis adorationem et servitutem renuentes contempserunt atque consentientes condemnaverunt.*" (Mansi, *Concil.*, t. VIII, p. 909.)

7 Cfr. Petavius, *De Incarn.*, XV,

a) For the Scriptural argument we must refer the reader to our treatise on God.[8] An explicit prohibition of image worship occurs in Ex. XX, 4 sq.: "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing,[9] nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them: I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children . . ."

It may be objected that this text forbids the making of images. It does, but only for the reason that the Jewish people were inclined to idolatry.

The veneration of holy images is not a positive command, but the Church is free either to introduce and encourage, or to limit and even to prohibit it where there is danger of serious abuse, as there might be, for example, in a country whose inhabitants were but just converted from idolatry.[10]

b) The true Tradition is attested by all those Fathers who were quoted by the iconoclasts of the eighth and sixteenth centuries against the veneration of images. For in matter of fact those Fathers did no more than oppose the *ado-*

12 sqq.; Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, Vol. III, 2nd ed., pp. 690 sqq., Freiburg 1877.

8 Pohle-Preuss, *God: His Knowability, Essence, and Attributes*, 2nd ed., pp. 212 sqq., St. Louis 1914.

9 The Septuagint has εἴδωλον.

10 Cfr. St. John Damascene, *Or. de Imag.*, 1, n. 8. On canon 36 of the Council of Elvira, which presents some difficulties, see F. X. Funk, *Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen*, Vol. I, pp. 346 sqq., Paderborn 1897.

ration of images, in doing which they were in perfect harmony with the invariable teaching of the Church.

St. John Damascene, the great champion of Catholic truth against the Greek Iconoclasts, answered his opponents as follows: "All the passages which you bring forward do not stamp as a crime the worship we give to images, but the practice of the heathen, who make idols of them." [11] St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, who stood in the forefront of the battle,[12] was as emphatic in condemning the adoration of images as he was in defending the traditional custom of venerating them. "This," he says, "is the reason for the making of images: we do not transfer the adoration in spirit and truth, which is due to the incomprehensible and inaccessible Divinity, to images made by human hands; but we show the love which we rightly cherish for the true servants of the Lord, and by honoring them, honor God." [13]

c) The prohibition of the Seventh Ecumencial Council also includes representations of Christ, though, of course, our Saviour, being true God, is entitled to divine worship.[14]

a) There seems to be a contradiction between the teaching of this Council and that of St. Thomas, who, together with many of the older Scholastics, holds that images of Christ, nay even those of His holy Cross,

11 *Or. de Imag.*, 2, n. 17. Cfr. Billuart, *De Incarn.*, diss. 23, art. 3, §3.

12 He was forcibly deposed by Emperor Leo the Isaurian and died a victim of cruel persecution, A. D. 733.

13 *Ep. ad Ioa. Episc. Synad.*, *apud* Hardouin, *Concil.*, IV, 242.

14 Cfr. Pohle-Preuss, *Christology*, pp. 278 sqq.

are entitled to divine adoration (*cultus latriae*).[15] How is this apparent contradiction to be explained? Some modern theologians assume that the early Scholastics were unacquainted with the definition of Nicæa. We prefer the following explanation. The *cultus latriae* which St. Thomas demands for images of Christ and for His true Cross, is merely a relative worship, essentially distinct from the *cultus latriae absolutus* due to our Saviour Himself. The Angelic Doctor frequently insists on these two fundamental principles: (1) The rational creature alone is entitled to honor and reverence, and any reverence shown to an irrational creature must in some way or other be referred to a rational creature;[16]

15 *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 25, art. 3: "*Duplex est motus* (*internus*) *in imaginem: unus quidem in ipsam imaginem, secundum quod res quaedam est; alio modo in imaginem, inquantum est imago alterius; et inter hos duos motus est haec differentia, quia primus motus, quo quis movetur in imaginem ut est res quaedam, est alius a motu qui est in rem; secundus autem motus, qui est in imaginem inquantum est imago, est unus et idem cum illo qui est in rem. Sic ergo dicendum est, quod imagini Christi, inquantum est res quaedam, puta lignum sculptum vel pictum, nulla reverentia habetur, quia reverentia nonnisi rationali naturae debetur. Relinquitur ergo quod exhibeatur ei reverentia solum inquantum est imago, et sic sequitur, quod eadem reverentia exhibeatur imagini Christi et ipsi Christo. Quum ergo Christus adoretur adoratione latriae, consequens est, quod eius imago sit adoratione latriae adoranda.*" St. Thomas consistently extends this principle to the true Cross of our Divine Saviour. Cfr. *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 25, art. 4: "*Si ergo loquamur de ipsa cruce, in qua Christus crucifixus est, utroque modo est a nobis veneranda. Uno scil. modo, inquantum repraesentat nobis figuram Christi extensi in ea; alio modo ex contactu ad membra Christi et ex hoc, quod eius sanguine est perfusa. Unde utroque modo adoratur eadem adoratione cum Christo, scil. adoratione latriae. Et propter hoc etiam crucem alloquimur et deprecamur quasi ipsum crucifixum*" (as in the hymn "*O crux, ave, spes unica*"). He adds on the general subject of crucifixes (*l. c.*): "*Si vero loquamur de effigie crucis Christi in quacumque alia materia, puta lapidis vel ligni, argenti vel auri, sic veneramur crucem tantum ut imaginem Christi, quam veneramur adoratione latriae.*"

16 *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 25, art. 4: "*Honor seu reverentia non debetur nisi rationali naturae, creaturae autem insensibili* [*i. e., irrationali*] *non debetur honor vel reverentia nisi ratione rationalis naturae.*"

(2) Adoration is due solely to God and can be given to no creature on its own account (*i. e.*, absolutely).[17] In teaching, therefore, that an image of Christ must be worshipped *eadem adoratione* as our Lord Himself, St. Thomas evidently conceives the adoration due to the image as a *cultus latriae relativus*, a worship which reverts to Christ and consequently can no more be branded as idolatry than the honor rendered to a king's image can be termed superstition. This teaching is in consonance with that of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, which condemns the worship of images only in so far as it is liable to degenerate into idolatry. It is true, however, that according to the Nicene Council there is something in the images themselves which entitles them to veneration, inasmuch as they are "sacred objects" (*res sacrae, ὅσια*) and as such must be treated with reverence.[18] This St. Thomas seems to have overlooked.

β) If the true Cross is entitled to a relative *cultus latriae* because it touched the sacred body of Christ and was sprinkled with His blood, why are we forbidden to exhibit a like worship to the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose connexion with our Divine Lord was so much more intimate? St. Thomas answers this question as follows: "The rational creature can be venerated for its own sake. And therefore divine worship (*latria*) is due to no mere rational creature. The Blessed Virgin is a mere rational

17 *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 25, art. 5: "*Latria soli Deo debetur, nulli creaturae debetur latria, prout creaturam secundum se* [*i. e. absolute*] *veneramur.*"

18 *Synod. Nicaen. II* (a. 787): "*. . . ita ut istis* [*imaginibus*] *sicut figurae pretiosae ac vivificae crucis et sanctis evangeliis et reliquis sacris monumentis, incensorum et luminum oblatio ad harum honorem efficiendum exhibeatur. . . . Imaginis enim honor ad primitivum transit, et qui adorat imaginem, adorat in ea depicti subsistentiam.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 302. Cfr. on this subject Pesch, *Praelect. Dogmat.*, Vol. IV, 3rd ed., pp. 378 sq., Freiburg 1909.)

creature and consequently not entitled to divine worship, but solely to the veneration called *dulia*, in a higher degree, however, than other creatures, inasmuch as she is the Mother of God; and for this reason we say that she is entitled not to any kind of *dulia*, but to *hyperdulia*." [19] Billuart points out that this hyperdulic worship is absolute and therefore more perfect than the purely relative *cultus latriae*, which may be exhibited to inanimate objects.[20]

Thesis II: The pious veneration of holy images is licit and useful.

This is also an article of faith.

If those who adore images sin *per excessum*, those who deny the Catholic doctrine of the veneration of images sin *per defectum*. The chief champions of the last-mentioned error were the Iconoclasts of the eighth century and the Zwinglians and Calvinists,[21] together with a few minor sects, in the sixteenth.

Against the Iconoclasts the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicæa (A. D. 787) [22] defined that, "as the figure of the precious and life-giving cross, so also the holy and venerable images — whether of color, or of stone, or of any other appropriate material — are suitably set up in

19 *Summa Theol.*, 3a, qu. 25, art. 5: "*Creatura rationalis est capax venerationis secundum seipsam* [= *absolute*]. *Et ideo nulli purae creaturae rationali debetur cultus latriae. Quum igitur beata Virgo sit pura creatura rationalis, non debetur ei adoratio latriae, sed solum veneratio duliae, eminentius tamen quam ceteris creaturis, inquantum ipsa est mater Dei; et ideo dicitur quod debetur ei non qualiscumque dulia, sed hyperdulia.*"

20 Billuart, *De Incarn.*, diss. 23, art. 4. Cfr. De Lugo, *De Myst. Incarn.*, disp. 35, sect. 2.

21 Cfr. Calvin's *Instit.*, I, 2; IV, 9.

22 On this Council see A. Fortescue in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VII, pp. 622 sq.

the holy churches of God, on sacred vessels and garments, on walls and tables, in houses and on roads: namely the image of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ and that of our immaculate Lady, the holy Mother of God, and those of the venerable angels and of all holy and pious men." [23]

The Council of Trent teaches: "The images of Christ, and of His Virgin Mother, and of other Saints, are to be used and retained, especially in churches, and due honor and veneration is to be given them; not that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them, for which they are to be honored, or that anything is to be asked of them, or

23 Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 302: Ὁρίζομεν σὺν ἀκριβείᾳ πάσῃ καὶ ἐμμελείᾳ, παραπλησίως τῷ τύπῳ τοῦ τιμίου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ σταυροῦ ἀνατίθεσθαι τὰς σεπτὰς καὶ ἁγίας εἰκόνας, τὰς ἐκ χρωμάτων καὶ ψηφῖδος καὶ ἑτέρας ὕλης ἐπιτηδείως ἐχούσης, ἐν ταῖς ἁγίαις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίαις, ἐν ἱεροῖς σκεύεσι καὶ ἐσθῆσι, τοίχοις τε καὶ σανίσιν, οἴκοις τε καὶ ὁδοῖς· τῆς τε τοῦ κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰκόνος, καὶ τῆς ἀχράντου δεσποίνης ἡμῶν τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου, τιμίων τε ἀγγέλων, καὶ πάντων ἁγίων καὶ ὁσίων ἀνδρῶν. The current Latin translation renders this passage as follows: "*Definimus in omni certitudine ac diligentia, sicut figuram pretiosae ac vivificae crucis, ita venerabiles ac sanctas imagines proponendas tam quae de coloribus et tessellis, quam quae ex alia materia congruenter in sanctis Dei ecclesiis, et sacris vasis et vestibus, et in parietibus ac tabulis, domibus et viis: tam videl. imaginem Domini Dei et Salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi quam intemeratae dominae nostrae s. Dei genitricis, honorabiliumque angelorum et omnium sanctorum simul et almorum vivorum. Quanto enim frequentius*, etc." (*V. supra*, p. 163.) The infinitive ἀνατίθεσθαι, which is translated "*proponendas*" (*sc. esse*), means either: "[we define] that they (εἰκόνας) are set up," or (less in accordance with grammar) "that they should be set up." Since παραπλησίως with the dative has the force of: "with the same appropriateness as," "equally as" we translate: ". . . that they are as appropriately set up [placed] . . . as the . . . cross." The last part of the sentence: . . . τῆς τε τοῦ κυρίου . . . Χριστοῦ εἰκόνος, is rendered by the Latin translation according to the sense: *tam videlicet imaginem.* The Greek genitive εἰκόνος seems to depend in a way on τῷ τύπῳ . . . , hardly on τὰς εἰκόνας. It may be well to add that ὕλης ἐπιτηδείως ἐχούσης is ὕλης ἐπιτηδείας οὔσης, or simply ὕλης ἐπιτηδείας. The Latin translation somewhat obscures the meaning. It may be noted that this definition proved a source of inspiration and a guiding principle to Christian artists for all time.

that any confidence is to be placed in images, as was done by the heathen of old who placed their hope in idols; but because the honor which is shown them is referred to the originals which they represent; so that by the images we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads, and fall down, we adore Christ and venerate His Saints, whose likeness they represent."[24]

It follows that the worship which we Catholics give to holy images is purely relative according to the originals represented, and this relative worship is either latreutic, dulic or hyperdulic, as the case may be.

a) The Old Testament furnishes several instances in confirmation of the Catholic dogma of the veneration of images.[25] Thus Yahweh Himself commanded: "Thou shalt make also two cherubims of beaten gold, on the two sides of the oracle. . . . Thence will I give orders, and will speak to thee over the propitiatory, and from the midst of the two cherubims, which shall be upon the ark of the testimony, all things which I will command the children of Israel by thee."[26] For the Ark of the Covenant the Jews had the

24 Sess. XXV (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 986): "*Imagines porro Christi, Deiparae Virginis et aliorum Sanctorum in templis praesertim habendas et retinendas eisque debitum honorem et venerationem impertiendam, non quod credatur inesse aliqua in iis divinitas vel virtus, propter quam sint colendae, vel quod ab eis sit aliquid petendum vel quod fiducia in imaginibus sit figenda, veluti olim fiebat a gentibus quae in idolis spem suam collocabant; sed quoniam honos qui eis exhibetur, refertur ad prototypa quae illae repraesentant, ita ut per imagines, quas osculamur, etc.*" (*ut supra*, p. 142).

25 Attention was called to this fact as early as 780 by Pope Hadrian I, in his reply to the Greek Emperor Constantine and his mother Irene. Cfr. Mansi, *Concil.*, XIII 528 sqq.

26 Ex. XXV, 18, *22*.

greatest veneration. Cfr. Jos. VII, 6: "Josue rent his garments, and fell flat on the ground before the ark of the Lord until the evening, both he and all the ancients of Israel: and they put dust upon their heads." Another example in point is the brazen serpent. Numb. XXI, 8: "And the Lord said to him: Make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign: Whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live." This serpent, St. John tells us, was a type of the crucified Redeemer. Cfr. John III, 14: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." If the Jews were permitted to venerate the promised Messias under the image of a brazen serpent, why should we Christians be forbidden to adore Him under the figure of the Good Shepherd or the Crucified Saviour? The Moors and Turks could hardly have chosen a more characteristic way of showing their contempt for our Divine Lord than by trampling upon the crucifix.

What is true of the images of our Lord is also true, *servatâ proportione,* of the images of His Blessed Mother and the Saints.[27]

b) The Second Ecumenical Council (Nicæa, A. D. 787) introduces its teaching on image worship

27 Cfr. L. Janssens, *Christologia,* p. 811, Freiburg 1891.

by the remark that, in stating the Catholic doctrine in the way it does, it keeps to "the royal highway of tradition," and concludes: "For thus the teaching of our holy Fathers, that is to say, the tradition of the holy Catholic Church, will be made effective." [28] Pope Hadrian I (A. D. 780), in his dogmatic epistle to Constantine and Irene, appealed to the traditional practice of the Roman Church and quoted in its support a considerable number of ancient Fathers, *e. g.*, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrose, and Jerome.[29]

a) Thus St. Cyril of Alexandria says in his commentary on the Psalms: "Though we make images of saintly men, we do not venerate them as gods, but merely wish to be inspired by their example to imitate them. But the image of Christ we make in order to fire our hearts with love for Him. Assuredly we do not adore a perishable image or the likeness of a perishable man. But since God, without changing Himself, condescended to become man, we represent Him as a man, though we are well aware that He is by nature God. We do not, therefore, call the image God, but we know that He whom it represents is God." [30]

Theodoret relates that the Christians of Rome erected statuettes of St. Simon Stylites (d. 479) at the entrance

28 "*Sic enim robur obtinet SS. Patrum nostrorum doctrina, i. e. traditio sanctae catholicae Ecclesiae.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 302.)

29 Mansi, *l. c.* On the peculiar attitude of Eusebius of Cæsarea, Epiphanius, and Augustine see F. X. Funk, *Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen*, Vol. I, pp. 349 sqq.

30 *In Ps.*, 113, 16.

of their workshops, in order "thereby to assure themselves of protection and safety." [31]

The lack of examples showing that the veneration of images was practiced in the first three centuries, which used to be deplored by Catholic theologians,[32] has been supplied by the recent discovery in the Roman catacombs of images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and other Saints.[33]

β) While Tradition leaves no doubt that the veneration of the images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Saints (as well as of the angels) [34] has always been considered licit in the Church, the case is different with representations of God and the Trinity. With regard to these we can quote no such binding definitions as those we have adduced in reference to the former class of holy images.[35] Nevertheless, present-day theologians are agreed as to the permissibility of making and venerating images of God and the Trinity, provided no attempt is made to picture the Divine Nature itself. It is in this sense that we must interpret the warning of St. John of Damascus: "If we were to make an image of the invisible God, we should in truth go wrong; for it is impossible to make a statue of one who is without body, invisible, boundless, and formless." [36] When this danger is excluded, the Divinity may be pictured either by way of a historical theophany (*e. g.*, the Yahweh-Angel appearing in the flaming fire of the bush) or allegorically (as, for instance, when, to symbolize His

31 *Hist. Rel.*, c. 26.

32 Cfr. Petavius, *De Incarn.*, n. 506.

33 Cfr. Wilpert, *Die Malereien in den Katakomben Roms*, Freiburg 1903; Liell, *Die Darstellungen der allerseligsten Jungfrau und Gottesgebärerin Maria auf den Kunstdenkmälern in den Katakomben*, Freiburg 1887.

34 *Synod. Nicaen. II*, *supra* p. 170.

35 Cfr. Billuart, *De Incarn.*, diss. 23, art. 3, §4.

36 *Or. de Imag.*, 2, n. 5.

eternity, God is represented as an old man,[37] or His omniscience is emblemed by a seeing eye[38]), etc. Pope Alexander VIII (A. D. 1690) condemned the proposition: "It is wrong to exhibit in a Christian church a picture representing God the Father in a sitting posture."[39] With regard to representations of the Blessed Trinity, Pius VI protested against the sweeping condemnation of the pseudo-council of Pistoja as follows: "The prohibition which generally and indiscriminately ranges representations of the inscrutable Trinity among those images which should be banished from the Church because they furnish an occasion of error to the unlearned, is too general in its terms and therefore rash and contrary to the pious custom practiced by the Church; for there are representations of the Trinity which are universally approved and may be safely permitted."[40] The Pope's remark does, however, contain a warning to Christian artists to be careful in depicting the Trinity. The safest policy is to adhere to the traditional and approved symbols. It would certainly be improper to represent the triune God as a man with three heads or three faces.[41]

Catechists and preachers should instruct the faithful in the meaning of current symbolic images of God and the Trinity.[42]

c) Though there is no room for dispute as regards the permissibility of the veneration of

37 Cfr. Dan. VII, 9.

38 Cfr. Ecclus. XXIII, 27.

39 Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1315.

40 *Constit. "Auctorem fidei,"* A. D. 1794 (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1569).

41 "*Si pingeretur Trinitas sub specie unius hominis habentis tria capita vel tres facies.*" (Billuart, l. c.)

42 On the iconography of the Deity and Trinity in ancient Christian art, cfr. C. M. Kaufmann, *Christliche Archäologie*, pp. 392 sq., Paderborn 1905.

images, theologians disagree as to the *manner* in which they should be venerated. De Lugo distinguishes two separate questions: (1) *Whether* holy images may be venerated, and (2) *How* they should be venerated. The first question, he says, is in dispute between Catholics and heretics, the second, among Catholics. The first is easier of solution than the second.[43]

a) Some Catholic divines (notably Durandus and Alphonsus a Castro) hold that holy images are not in themselves worthy of veneration, but merely furnish an occasion to honor their originals. This opinion militates both against common sense and the defined teaching of the Church. A devoted son who kisses the image of his mother obviously honors the image itself, because of its relation to one who is near and dear to him. Similarly a Catholic uncovers his head and kneels before the statue of a Saint, and not before the Saint himself whom the statue represents, thus showing that he regards the image as something more than a mere ornament or means of instruction. The official teaching of the Church is perfectly plain on this point. The Seventh Ecumenical Council refers to the images of the Saints as "venerable and holy," while that of Trent declares them to be entitled to honor and reverence.[44] A still plainer expression is that of the Eighth Ecumenical Council (A. D. 869), which says: "It is becoming that, in harmony with reason and a very ancient tradition, holy images be derivatively

43 De Lugo, *De Myst. Incarn.*, disp. 36, sect. 2: "*Duplex potest esse in hoc quaestio: prima, utrum imagines sint adorandae* [*colendae*]; *secunda, quomodo sint adorandae. Prima est cum haereticis, secunda cum Catholicis; prima facilis, secunda difficilis.*"

44 *V. supra*, p. 170.

honored and adored, in reference, namely, to the originals which they represent, just like the holy book of the Gospels and the figure of the precious Cross."[45] This view is in harmony with the universal practice of the faithful,— which was expressly defended by Pope Pius VI against the pseudo-council of Pistoja,— of showing particular veneration and attributing special titles of honor to miraculous images of the Saints, especially those of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and preserving certain holy images under cover so that they cannot be seen.[46] The opinion of Durandus and Alphonsus a Castro is unanimously rejected by modern theologians.

β) Other divines hold that the veneration of the faithful is directed both to the image and its prototype, *relative et secundario* to the one, *absolute et primario* to the other. In other words, the image and its original together constitute the adequate total object of the cult; the image being venerated solely for the sake of, and in reference to, the original. According to this theory representations of God and Christ are entitled to a latreutic, those of the Blessed Virgin Mary to a hyperdulic, those of the angels and Saints to a merely relative dulic cult. St. Thomas,[47] St. Bonaventure, Capreolus, Soto, Vasquez, Antoine, and other theologians support this teaching by weighty arguments both from reason and authority. In the first place, they say, no inanimate object is entitled to a cult which would, as it were, bend the

45 "*Dignum est, ut secundum congruentiam rationis et antiquissimam traditionem propter honorem, quia ad principalia* [*prototypa*] *ipsa referuntur, etiam derivative iconae honorentur et adorentur, aeque ut sanctorum sacer Evangeliorum liber atque typus pretiosae crucis.*" (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 337.)

46 Cfr. *Constit.* "*Auctorem fidei,*" A. D. 1794 (Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1570 sqq.).

47 *V. supra*, p. 167.

faithful Catholic beneath the image. A person, as such, is always superior to a mere material object. The exterior submission exhibited to an image, therefore, considered as the manifestation of an interior sentiment, can only refer to the original, and consequently the worship given to holy images, strictly and properly speaking, is purely relative. For this reason many councils have emphasized the proposition that "the honor shown to a holy image is referred to its prototype."[48]

Cardinal Bellarmine objects that the language employed by the champions of this direct, though relative cult, is dangerous because it gives offence to Catholics and furnishes heretics an occasion for blasphemy.[49] Bossuet expresses a more judicious view when he observes: "St. Thomas says the Cross is worthy of *latria,* which is the highest form of worship. But he explains that such *latria* is relative, and not supreme except when it refers to Jesus Christ. The ground upon which the holy Doctor bases his argument is that the worship shown to an image is identical with that shown to its original, and that both are thus combined. Who would censure this opinion? If the terms in which it is couched displease us, let us simply give them up, as Fr. Petavius has done; for the Church has never adopted this phraseology of St. Thomas. But it is a sign of great weakness and vanity to marvel at a theory which is so reasonable."[50]

48 *V. supra,* p. 171. On a similar but misunderstood phrase in St. Basil's treatise *De Spiritu Sancto* (c. 18, 45), cfr. Funk, *Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen,* Vol. II, pp. 251 sqq.

49 Bellarmine, *De Imag.,* II, 22: "*Hunc loquendi modum non carere magno periculo . . . offendere aures Catholicorum et praebere occasionem haereticis liberius blasphemandi.*"

50 Bossuet, *Oeuvres,* Vol. V, p. 277, Paris 1743: "*S. Thomas attribue à la croix le culte de latrie, qui est le culte suprême. Mais il s'explique en disant que c'est une latrie respective, qui dès là en elle-même n'est plus suprême et ne le devient que parce qu'elle se rap-*

β) Bellarmine held,—and his opinion was shared, among others, by Catharinus and Platel,—that holy images may indeed be venerated for their own sake, but with a lesser cult than the originals, and that no image, not even that of the Divinity itself, is entitled to a relative divine worship (*cultus latriae relativus*). This theological school demands that in exhibiting veneration to a holy image, we subject ourselves to it not only in body, but with mind and heart, not indeed for the sake of the image, but with a view to its original. This theory, too, can be defended by solid arguments. The conciliar definitions which deal with the subject demand no higher cult for any sacred image than that which we give to the book of the holy Gospels or to sacred vessels, neither of which class of objects is entitled to the *cultus latriae relativus*. Again, an image, as such, is inferior to its original, and not entitled to the same kind of worship. There is a specific difference between adoration and veneration. If Christ were to re-appear in person, we should worship Him in a different manner than we venerate His image. The civil law makes an analogous distinction by punishing personal insults against those in authority more severely than disrespect shown to their pictures.[51]

porte à Jésus-Christ. Le fondement de ce saint docteur c'est que le mouvement qui porte à l'image est le même que celui qui porte à l'original, et qu'on unit ensemble l'un et l'autre. Qui peut blâmer ce sens? Personne, sans doute. Si l'expression déplait, il n'y a qu'à la laisser là, comme a fait sans hésiter le P. Pétau; car l'Église n'a pas adopté cette expression de S. Thomas. Mais on sera bien faible et bien vain, si on est étonné de choses qui ont un sens si raisonnable." On the view held by St. Thomas, *V. supra*, pp. 166 sqq.

51 Attempts have been made to reconcile the second and the third of the above described theories. Cfr. Billuart, *De Incarn.*, diss. 23, art. 3, §5, and De Lugo, *De Myst. Incarn.*, disp. 36, sect. 3. See also G. B. Tepe, *Instit. Theol.*, Vol. III, pp. 747 sqq.

The worship of images (taking the latter term in its widest sense) corresponds to a deeply ingrained sentiment of human nature. To analyze this sentiment is the task of philosophy. We leave it to the psychologists to explain why the image of a King or President should be privately and publicly honored by manifestations of respect such as the uncovering of heads, the discharging of cannon, and the lowering of flags. If such exterior tributes of veneration may be properly paid to secular rulers, they are surely not out of place when rendered to Almighty God and the angels and Saints who rule with Him in Heaven.

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